THE RETVRNING BACKSLIDER,

OR,

A COMMENTARIE

upon the whole XIIII. Chapter

of the Prophecy of the Prophet HOSEA.

Wherein is shewed the large extent of GODS free Mercy, even unto the most miserable forlorne and *wretched sinners that may be, upon their* Humiliation and Repentance.

Preached by that Learned and Judicious Divine, Dr. SIBBS, late Preacher to the Honourable Society of *Grayes Inne*, and Master of Katherine Hall in CAMBRIDGE.

Publish:d by his owne Permission before his Death

The second Edition.

JERE M. 3. 10, 11.

Goe and Proclaime these words towards the North, and say, Returne thou Backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; *and I will not cause mine Anger to fall upon you: for I am mercifull, saith the* LORD, *and I will not keepe anger for ever. Onely acknowledge thine Iniquity, &c.*

LONDON.

Printed by *G. M.* for *George Edwards* in the Old Baily in Gregne. Arbour at the signe of the Angell, 1641.

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CONCIONIBVS

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RETURNING

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To the Reader.

GOod Reader this Treatise begs the favour of those, concerning whom especially it is said Christ came for, poore trembling sinners, the blind, the prisoners of hope, and such who by the assiduity, iteration and multitude of Satans discouragements and temptations, sit as it were in darkenesse, and in the valley of

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death, to whom every sowre thing is sweete. Because these most of all relish and stand in need of mercy: for when the least flame of that unsupportable wrath, breakes forth in shew, which is powred out like fire, and kindled by the breath of the Lord of Hostes like a river of brimstone, which can make the mountaines quake, the hils melt, burne up the earth and all that is therein, the poore soule for the time thinking on nothing but blacknesse and darkenesse of tempest, whilst by past sinnes, without sight of the Mediator stares them in the face with millions of unconceivable horrors and astonishments, then to see light in darkenesse,

neſſe, Mercy in wrath, the Sunſhine of righteouſneſſe, a gracious God appeaſed by a Mediator, with ſome ſight and ſenſe of its intereſt therin, this muſt needs overjoy the troubled ſoule: which is the maine ſubject of this Booke: how gratious God is to encourage miſerable ſinners to returne: what incouragements and helps hee gives them: what effects his gratious working hath in them: and how ſweetly they cloſe with him againe. Wherefore though this meſſe comes not unto thee ſet forth in a Lordly diſh, not having paſſed ſince the preaching thereof, under the exquiſite hand of the moſt worthy Author, yet deſpiſe it not: for

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many times though things of greater judgement affect the understanding most, yet things of lesser conciseneſſe, worke more upon the affections in a plaine flowing way: which happineſſe with all other felicities he wisheth thee, who is ever

Thine in the beſt bonds

J. H.

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THE RETVRNING BACKSLIDER.

SERMON. I.

Hos. 14. 1, 2.

O Israel, Returne unto the Lord thy God: For thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.
Take with you words, and turne to the Lord, say unto him, take away all iniquity, &c.

THE whole frame of *Godlinesse* is a *Mysterie*, The Apostle calleth it, *a great Mysterie*, comprehending all under these particulars: *God was manifested in the flesh, Iustified in the Spirit, Seene of Angels, Preached unto the Gentiles, Beleeved on in the world: received up into Glory.* Amongst

Sect. I.

Amongst which *Mysteries*, this may well be the *Chief* of those *Mysteries*, *God manifest in the flesh*: which includeth also another *Mysterie*, The *Gratiousnesse* and *abundant tender Mercy* of God towards miserable wretched and sinnefull Creatures, even in the height of their Rebellion; appointing such a remedy to heale them: which is the subject of this Chapter, and last part of this Propheeie: which, as it thunders out terrible Judgements against hardhearted impenitent sinners: (such as were the most part of *Israel*) so is it mingled full of many and sweet Consolations to the faithfull in those times, scattered amongst the wicked troup of Idolaters then living.

The time when *Hosea* propheeied was under the Reigne of *Vzziah*, *Iotham*, *Ahaz*, and *Hezekiah* Kings of *Iudah*: and in the dayes of *Ieroboam*, the sonne of *Ioash*, King of *Israel*: In whose daies Idolatry was first universally set up and countenanced by Regall power; This *Ieroboam* (*who caused Israel to sinne*) that he might strengthen himselfe, made use of Religion and prophanely mixed it with his civill affaires in carnall pollicie, and so leavened the whole lump of *Israel* with Idolatry, that shortly after the whole ten Tribes for their sin, and their injustice, crueltie, lust, securitie, and such other sins as accompanied and sprang from this brutish Idolatry, were led away captive by the King of *Assyria*, and the Lords righteous Judgement made manifest upon them.

There

Sam. 1.

There being notwithstanding amongst these some faithfull ones though thinly scattered, who mourned for, and by their good examples reproved these abhominable courses. There being also a seed of the Elect unconverted, and of the converted some that were carried down too fart in the strength of this streame of wickednesse. In this Chapter therefore being the conclusion of this Prophesie there are many excellent and heavenly incouragements, also many earnest incitements to repentance and returning to the Lord, with free and gratious promises not only of pardon and acceptance, but of great rewards in things spirituall and temporall to such as should thus returne.

O Israel, Returne unto the Lord *thy* God, *for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.*

Take with you words, and turne to the Lord, *say unto him, Take away all iniquity*, &c.

In this Chapter.

1. Wee have an *Exhortation* to *Repentance*, with the *Motives* enforcing the same. [*O Israel, Returne unto the Lord thy* God.] V. 1.
2. The *Forme* [*Take with you words, and say unto the* Lord, *&c.*] Ver. 2.
3. A *Restipulation*, what they should doe and Returne backe againe, having their Prayers granted. 1. *Thankesgiving* [*So will we render the Calves of our lips.*] 2. *Sound Reformation* of their beloved sin, [*Assur shall not save us*, &c,] with the *Reason* thereof, [*For in thee the Fatherlesse findeth Mercy*, Ver. 3.

? Gods mercy in Judgment of Israel in Ahaziahs Raigne Giving them 40 yeares for their purpose.

4. *Gods anſwer to their Petitions.* 1. In what Hee *will doe for them.* [*Heale their backſliding. Love them freely: and be as the Dew unto Iſrael*] with the *Reaſon* thereof. [*For mine Anger is turned away from him*] V. 4. 2. What hee will *Worke* in them: *A proportionable ſpeedie* growth in height, bredth and depth: [*He ſhall grow as the Lillie, and caſt forth his rootes as Lebanon*, &c.] Which Mercy is further amplified; *by a bleſſing powred out alſo* upon their *Families.* [*They that dwell under his ſhadow ſhall returne.*] Verſe. 5, 6, 7.

5. There is ſet downe a further effect of this *Repentance*, and gratious wörke in them: A ſound and ſtrong well rooted Indignation againſt their former darling ſinnes [*Ephraim ſhall ſay, what have I any more to doe with Idols?*] Backt with a *ſtrong Conſolation:* [*I have heard him, and obſerved him*, &c.] Verſe. 8.

6. The divers Event and Iſſue of this Gods ſo gratious dealing is ſhewed: both in the *godly* and *Wicked.* 1. The *Wiſe* and *Prudent, underſtand and know, that the wayes of the Lord are right*, and ſhall *walke* in them. But 2. [*The tranſgreſſors ſhall fall therein*] Ver. 9.

O Iſrael, Returne unto the Lord thy God: for thou haſt fallen by thine Iniquity.

Every word hath his waight, and in a manner is an *Argument* to inforce this *Returning.*

O

O Israel!

Israel we know is a word of Covenant: *Iacob* was *Israel*, a *Prince* and *Wrestler* with God, (as they also ought to be) Therefore he enforceth, you also ought to *Returne*, because you are *Israel*. And 2. It was also an *Incouragement* for them to *Returne*, because God so acknowledgeth them to be *Israel*: and will be gratious unto them, though they were such hideous sinners,

Returne (saith he) *unto the Lord Iehovah*, who is the chiefe good; for when a man returneth to the creature, which is a particular changeable good unsatisfying the soule, he is restlesse still untill hee come unto *Iehovah*, who is the all-sufficient universall good, who fills and fills the soule abundantly: therefore, *Returne* to him who is *the fountaine of all good*, and giveth a beeing unto all things: and not to *broken Cisternes*. Hee is *Iehovah*, like himselfe and *changeth not*. And then He is thy God. Therefore *Returne* to him who is thy God *in Covenant*, who will make good his gratious Covenant unto thee, and did choose thee to be *his people, before all the nations of the world*; this therefore is also an *Incouragement to Returne*. And then Jerem. 2. 13.

Thou hast fallen by thine Iniquity.

Therefore because thou art fallen by thy Iniquities, and thine own Inventions have brought these miseries upon thee, and none but God can helpe thee out of these miseries, seeing he only can, and is willing to forgive thy sinnes, and revive thee: Therefore,

SERM. I.

O Israel, Returne unto the Lord thy God: for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.

Now in that hee forewarneth them of the fearefull Judgements to come, which were to fall upon them, unlesse they were prevented by true Repentance; hence in generall it is to be observed;

Observ. That *God comes not as a suddaine storme upon his people, but gives them warning before hee smites them.*

This is verified in Scripture: when the crie of *Sodome* and *Gomorrah* was great, *The Lord said, Because the cry of Sodome and Gomorrah is great, and because their sinne is very grievous: I will goe downe now and see whether they have done altogether according to the crie of it which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.* Gen. 18. 20, 21. And wherefore was the *Arke* of *Noah* so long in building, but to give warning to that sinnefull age, which were nothing bettered by it. The like we have of *Pharaoh*, and all the *Egyptians* who had so many warnings and miracles shewed before their destruction came. Thus God dealt in *Amos: Therefore thus will I doe unto thee; and because I will doe this unto thee; Prepare to meet thy God O Israell.* Exod. 11. 1. Amos. 4. 12. *O Hierusalem, Hierusalem* (saith *Christ*) *thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together: even as a Henne gathereth the chickens under her wings and ye would not?* Mat. 23. 37. What need wee stand upon proofes? are not all the Threatnings of Scripture, as so many warning

warning peeces of approaching Judgements. Serm. I.

The Reason hereof is, *It is owne nature, he is a God of long suffering*, he made the world in six dayes; yet hath continued it five thousand yeares, notwithstanding the many sinnes and provocations thereof, *His mercies being over all his works.* *Reason.* 1. Exod. 34. 6. Psal. 145. 9.

And partly, *from a speciall regard to his own deare children*, these terrible threatnings not being killing and wounding, but like *Ionathans* warning Arrowes, who though he shot, yet meant no other harme to *David*, save to forewarne him of harme. 2. 1 Sam. 20.

Let us therefore observe Gods gracious and milde dealing in so much mercy, who giveth us so many warnings by his servants, and lesser judgements, which we have had amongst us; Let us take notice and believe, so as beliefe may stirre up feare, and feare may provoke care, and care stirre up indeavours, to provide us an *Arke* even a hiding place betimes before winter and worse times come upon us. *Vse.*

Hence ariseth another generall Point: That *The best provision for preventing of destruction is spirituall meanes.* *Observ.*

God himselfe is a Spirit, and spirituall meanes reach unto him, who is the first mover of the great wheele of all the affaires of this world: It is preposterous to beginne at the second cause, we trouble our selves in vaine there, when we neglect the first. Wee should therefore begin the worke in Heaven, and first of all, take up that quarrell which is betweene God and our

Serm. I.

soules: If this be done first, we need not feare the carriage of second things, all which God out of his good providence, and gratious care will frame to worke for good to his: for whose sakes (rather then helpe should faile) he will create new helpes. Wherefore in all things it is best to beginne with God.

Rom. 8. 28.

Isa. 4. 5.

The third generall point, is this: That

Observ.

Of all Spirituall meanes, the best is to returne to the Lord.

In Returning, 1. There must be a stop.

In this *Returning*, 1. *There must be a stop*: those who have run on in evill waies, must first stop their lewd courses, for naturally from our birth and childhood wee are posting on to Hell; and yet such is our madnesse, (unlesse the Spirit of God shew us our selves) to be angry with these who stand in our way.

1. Examination.

To make this *stop* then (which is alwayes before *Returning*) 1. There must be Examination and Consideration whether our wayes tend: there be stopping Considerations, which both waken a man, and likewise put rubs in his way. If a man upon *Examination* find his waies displeasing unto God, disagreeing from the Rule, and *consider* what will be the end and issue of them, (nothing but death and damnation) and withall *consider* of the day of Judgement, the houre of Death, the all-seeing eye of God and the like. So the Consideration of a mans owne wayes, and of Gods wayes towards him, partly when God meeres him with goodnesse: *I have hitherto beene a vile wretch; and God hath*

beene good to me, and spared me: and partly when God stops a wicked mans waies with thornes, meetes him with crosses and afflictions, these will worke upon an ingenious spirit to make him have better thoughts and deeper considerations of true happinesse and the way unto it. God puts into the heart of a man (whom he intends to save) serious and sad considerations, what estate hee is in, whither his course leads; and withall hee lets them feele some displeasure of his towards them in those waies, by his wayes towards them, whereupon they make a stop.

SERM. I.

2. There must be *Humiliation, with displeasure against our selves, judging and taking revenge of our selves, working* and *reflecting on our hearts*, taking shame to our selves, for our wayes and courses. And withall, *there must conceive some hope of mercy*: for, so long as there is hue and crie (as we say) after a Traitor, he returnes not, but flyes still and hasts away; but offer a pardon, and he returneth. So, unlesse there be hope of pardon to draw a man againe to God, as the *Prodigall* was moved to *Returne* by hope of *mercy* and favour from his father, we will not, we dare not else *Returne*. 2. Humiliation. Luk. 15.

3. There must be a *Resolution* to overcome impediments, for when a man thinks or resolves to turne to God, Satan will stirre up all his instruments, and labour to kill Christ in his Infancie, and to quench good while it is in the purpose only, the Dragon stood watching for the 3. Resolution.

Serm. I.

Birth of the Childe so doth Satan observe the birth of every good resolution and purpose so farre as he can know them to destroy them.

Vse. Let it be thought of by us in all our distresses, and in whatsoever other evidences of Gods anger, whether this meanes have bin taken up by us. It will be thus knowne.

1. Turning is a change of the posture of the body, so is this of the frame of the mind; by this we know a man is in a state of turning, the looke of his Intentions, Purposes, the whole bent of his soule is set another way, even upon God, and his Word is the starre of Direction towards which he bends all his thoughts.

2. *There is a Change of Actions.* 2. *His present actions also be contrary to his former:* there is not only a change of the disposition of his soule: *Behold all things are become new.* Not some things but all, not only *new*, but with a *Behold new.* This change undoubtedly sheweth that there is a true conversion and unfained.

2 Cor. 5. 17.

3. *By our association.* 3. By our association, he that turnes to God, turnes presently *to the company of Gods people*: together with the change of his nature and course of life, there is a change of company, that is of such as we make choice of for amity and friendship; other company by reason of our callings, and occasionally may be frequented.

Ha. 11.

4. It is a signe that one is not only *Turned*, but hath gone backwards from sinne a great way, when the things of Heaven only are great things in his eyes, for as the further a man goes from a place, the lesser the things behind him seeme,

so the greater the things before, he being neerer to them. The more sublime and high thoughts a man hath of the wayes of God, and the meaner thoughts of the world and worldly matters he esteemed so highly of is the dayes of his vanity: the more he is *Turned* unto God.

This *Returning* is further inforced, saying, *Returne, unto the Lord thy God.*

It is very emphaticall and significant in the Originall, returne [*usque ad Iehovam*] even to *Iehovah*, as though he should say, do not only beginne to *Returne* towards *Iehovah*: but so *Returne, as you never cease comming till you come to Iehovah.*

Even unto the Lord thy God.

It is not enough to make a stop and forbeare the practising of our former sinnes: but we must come home, even unto the Lord our God, to be pardoned and healed of him. *Observ.*

The *Prodigall sonne*, had beene never a whit the better, to see his sinne and misery, and to be grieved for his wicked life past, unlesse he had come unto his father for *Pardon* and *Comfort*. Luk. 15.

And when those were pricked in their hearts at *Peters* Sermon, asking *Peter* what they should do? hee exhorted them, *To Repent, every one to be Baptised in the name of Iesus Christ, for the Remission of sinnes: and so they should receive the Holy Ghost.* Act. 2. 38.

And when Christ invites all those *who are weary and heavy laden to come unto him*; he bids them not now be further humbled and grieved for their sinnes: but by Faith to Mat. 11. 28.

come

Serm. I.

come unto him to be healed, and so they should find rest and peace to their soules. It is not sufficient for a wounded man to be sorry for his brawling and fighting, and to say he will fight no more: but he must come to the Surgeon to have his wounds stopt, dressed and healed, or else it may cost him his life: So it is not enough to be humbled and grieved for sin, and to resolve against it: we shall relapse againe do what we can, unlesse we come under the wing of Christ to be healed by his blood.

Vse. Many think they have repented and are deceived upon this false ground: they are and have bin grieved for their sins and offences, are determined to leave and forsake them, and that is all they do, they never lay hold on Christ and come home to God.

For thou hast fallen by thine Iniquity.

Here divers points might be insisted on.

Observ. 1. *That where there is a falling into sinne, there will be a falling into miserie and judgement.*

This is made good in the experience of all times, ages, persons, and states; still the more sinfull any were, the more fearefull judgements fell upon them: and as soone as any man came into a sinfull state, he entered into a declining state, as *Iacob* said of his sonne *Reuben* who had defiled his bed: *unstable as water, Thou shalt not excell;* Gen. 49. 4. *because thou wentest up to thy fathers bed.* So sinne still debaseth a man: so much sin, so much losse of excellencie.

The Vse hereof is first against those, that complaine

complaine of their troubles and miseries, as though God and men had dealt hardly with them, whereas their owne wayes indeed have brought all these evills upon them, God is a sufficient wise and holy disposer and orderer of all the wayes of men; and rewarder of good and evill doings; God being wise and just in his disposing of all things, it must needs follow, that it shall goe well with those that are good; as the Prophet speakes; *Say unto the just, that it shall be well with them; for the reward of their workes shall be given them.* And if it fall out otherwayes then well with men, the blame must be laid on their owne sinne. As the Church confesseth, and therefore resolveth: *I will beare the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him; untill he plead my cause, and execute judgement for me: he will bring me forth in the light; and I shall see his Righteousnesse.* If *Adam* sinne he shall find a Hell in a Paradice, if *Paul* returne and returne to God he shall find a Heaven in a Dungeon.

Vse. 1.

Lam. 3 39.

Micah. 7, 9.

It should move us therefore to seeke unto God by unfained Repentance to have our sinnes taken away and pardoned, or else, howsoever wee may change our plagues; yet they shall not be taken away, nay wee shall still (like *Pharoah*) change for the worst, who though he had his judgements changed: yet sinne, the cause remaining, he was never a whit the better, but the worse for changing, untill his finall ruine came.

Vse. 2.

The

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Rom. 6. 23. *The wages of ſinne is Death,* Sinne will crie till it hath its wages. *Where Iniquity is, there cannot but be falling into judgement.* Therefore they are cruell to their owne ſoules, that walke in evill wayes, for undoubtedly God will turne their owne wayes upon their owne heads. Wee ſhould not therefore envie any man (be hee what he will) who goeth on in ill courſes, ſeeing ſome judgement is owning him firſt or laſt, unleſſe he ſtop the current of Gods wrath by Repentance. God in much mercy hath ſet up a Court in our hearts to this end, that if we judge our ſelves in this inferiour Court, we may eſcape, and not be brought up into the higher: if firſt they be judged rightly in the inferiour Court, then there needs no review. But otherwiſe, if wee by Repentance take not up the matter, ſtnne muſt be judged ſome where, either in the Tribunall of the heart and conſcience, or elſe afterwards there muſt be a reckoning for it.

Vſe. 3. Thirdly, hence we learne; ſince the cauſe of every mans miſerie is his owne ſinne; *that therefore all the power of the world, and of Hell, cannot keepe a man in miſerie, nor hinder him from comfort and happineſſe, if he will part with his ſinnes by true and unfained Repentance,* as we know *Manaſſes,* as ſoone as he put away ſin the Lord had mercy upon him, and turned his captivity. 2 Chro. 33. 12, 13. So the people of *Iſraell* in the *Iudges,* looke how often they were humbled and returned to God, ſtill he forgave them all their ſins, as ſoone as they

they put away sinne, God and they met againe. So that, if we come to Christ by true Repentance, neither sinne nor punishment can cleave to us. Psal.106.43, 44. Psal.107.19.

Thou hast fallen, &c.

Fallen blindly as it were, thou couldest not see which way thou wentest, or to what end thy courses did tend, therefore thou art come into misery, before thou knowest where thou art. A sinner is blind, the god of this world hath put out his eyes, they see not their way, nor foresee their successe. The Divell is ever for our falling, that we fall into sinne, and then fall into misery, and so fall into despaire, and into hell, this pleaseth him. *Cast thy selfe downe*, saith hee to Christ, downe with it, downe with it, saith *Edom*, Hell is beneath, the Divell drives all that way. 1 Cor.4.

Take heed of sinne, take heed of blindnesse, ponder the path of your feet, keepe your thoughts heaven-ward, stop the beginnings, the first stumblings, pray to God to make our way plaine before us, and not to lead us into temptation. *Vse.*

Ver.2. *Take with you words, and turne to the Lord, say unto him*, &c.

These *Israelites* were but a rude people, and had not so good meanes to thrive in grace, as *Iudah* had: Therefore he prompts them here with such words as they might use to God in their *returning*. [*Take with you words*,] whereby we

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we ſee how gratious God is unto us, in uſing ſuch helps for our recovery, and pittying us more then wee pitty our ſelves. Is not this a ſufficient warrant and invitation to *returne*, when the party offended who is the ſuperiour, deſires, intreats, and ſues unto the offending, guilty inferiour to be reconciled.

2 Cor 5.

God is willing to be at peace with us.

But this is not all, hee further ſheweth his willingneſſe in teaching us who are ignorant of the way, in what manner and with what expreſſions we ſhould returne to the Lord. He giveth us not onely words and tells us what wee ſhall ſay, but alſo giveth his Spirit ſo effectually therewith, as that they ſhall not be liveleſſe and dead wordes, but (as *Rom.* 8. 26.) with unexpreſſible ſighes and groanes unto God; who heareth the requeſts of his owne Spirit. Chriſt likewiſe teacheth us how to pray, we have words dictated, and a ſpirit of prayer powred upon us. As if a great Perſon ſhould dictate and frame a Petition for one who were affraid to ſpeake unto him. Such is Gods gratiouſneſſe, and ſo ready is hee in Jeſus Chriſt to receive ſinners unto mercy.

Take unto you wordes. None were to appeare empty before the Lord at *Ieruſalem*, but were to bring ſomething. So it is with us, we muſt not appeare empty before our God, If we can bring nothing elſe, let us bring *wordes*, yea though broken wordes, yet if out of a broken and contrite heart, it will be a ſacrifice acceptable.

This ſame taking of wordes or petitions in all our

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our troubles and afflictions, must needs be a speciall remedie, it being of Gods owne prescription, who is so infinite in knowledge and skill: whence we observe, That

They who would have helpe and comfort against all sinnes and sorrowes, must come to God with words of prayer. Observ.

As wee see in *Ionahs* case in a matchlesse distresse, words were inforcive and did him more good then all the world besides could: for after that hee had bin humbled and prayed out of the whales belly; the whale was forced to cast him out againe. So the *Prodigall sonne* Luk. 15.18. beeing undone, having neither credit, nor coyne, but all in a manner against him; yet hee had *words* left him. *Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee: and am no more worthy to bee called thy sonne, make mee as one of thy hired servants.* After which his father had compassion on him. And good *Hezekiah*, being Isa. 38.2. desperately sicke, of a desperate disease, yet when hee set his faith aworke, and tooke with him *words* (which comfort onely now was left unto him) wee know how after hee had turned his face towards the wall and prayed with *words*, God not only healed him of that dangerous disease, but also wrought a great miracle for his sake, causing the *Sunne* to come backe *ten degrees*. Thus when life seemed impossible: yet words, prayers, and teares prevailed with God. *Iehoshaphat* also, going to warre with *Ahab*, against Gods commandement 2 Chro. 18.31.

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dement, and in the battell being encompassed with enemies: yet had *words* with him ready and after prayer found deliverance. *Eliah*, likewise after a great drowth and famine, when raine had bin three yeares wanting: and all in a manner out of frame for a long time: *Tooke with him words*: and God sent raine abundantly upon the earth againe.

Iames. 5.

The Reason is, because Prayer sets God on worke, and God who is able and willing to go through with his works, sets all the creatures on worke. As we heard of *Eliah*, when hee prayed for raine, the creatures were set a worke to effect it. Where it may be Objected, O but raine might come too late in that hot Countrie, where all the Rootes and Herbes might bee withered and dried up in three yeares space, Yet all was well againe, the land brought forth her increase as formerly; for faithfull Prayer never comes too late; because God can never come too late, if our prayers come to him, we shall find him come to us. *Iehoshaphat* we read was in great distresse when three Kings came against him, yet when hee went to God by unfained and hearty fasting and prayer, God heard him, fought for him, and destroyed all his enemies. The Scripture sheweth also how after *Hezekiahs* prayer against *Senacheribs* blasphemies and threatnings: the Lord sent forth his Angell and destroyed in one night a hundred fourescore and five thousand of the *Assyrians*.

Hos. 2. 21, 22.

1 King. 18. 45

Object.

Answ.

2 Chro. 15. 2.

2 Chro. 19. 6. 14.

2 King. 19. 20, 35.

This

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This is first *for Reproofe of those* who in their distresses set their wit, wealth, friends, and all a worke, but never set God a worke, as *Hezekiah* did in *Senacheribs* case. The first time hee turned him off to his cost with enduring a heavie taxation, and yet was never a whit the better for it; for *Senacherib* came shortly after and besieged *Hierusalem*, untill *Hezekiah* had humbled himselfe and prayed: and then God chased all away and destroyed them; he had better have done so at first, and so saved his money and paines too. The like weakenesse we have a proofe of in *Asa*: who when a greater Armie came against him of ten hundred thousand men, laid about him, *Prayed* and *Trusted* in God, and so was delivered, with the destruction of his enemies; yet in a lesser danger, against *Baasha* King of *Israel*, distrusted God, and sent out the Treasures of the house of God, and of his owne house unto *Benhadad* King of *Syria*, to have helpe of him, by a diverting warre against *Baasha* King of *Israel*, which his plot though it prospered, yet was hee reproved by the Prophet *Hanani*, and warres thenceforth denounced against him. This *Asa* notwithstanding this experiment afterwards sought unto the Physitian, before he sought unto God.

Vse 1.

1 King. 18. 14.

2 Chron. 14. 11

2 Chron. 16. 2.

2 Chron. 16. 7.

Secondly, *This blameth that barrennesse and want of words to goe unto God*, which for want of hearts wee often find in our selves. It were a strange

Vse 2.

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strange thing to see a wife have words enough for her maids and servants: and yet not to be able to speake to her husband. Wee all professe to be the Spouse of Christ, what a strange thing then is it, to be full when wee speake to men, yet be so empty and want words to speake to him. A begger we know wants no words, nay, he aboundeth with variety of expressions: and what makes him thus fruitfull in words, his necessity and in part his hope of obtaining.

What makes a bold begger.

These two make beggers so earnest: So would it be with us, if we found sufficiently our great *need* of Christ, and therewith had *hope*, it would embolden us so to go to God in Christ, that we should not want words: but wee want this *hope* and the feeling of our necessities, which makes us so barren in prayer.

Prepare thy selfe therefore to prayer by getting unto thee *a true sense of thy need: acquaintance with God, and hope to obtaine*, and it will make thee fervent in prayer, and copious in thy requests.

Vse 3. Thirdly, this is *for Consolation*, though one should want all other meanes, yet whatsoever their misery be, if they can *take words*, and can pray well, they shall speed well. If the misery be sin, confesse it, and ask pardon for it, and they shall have it, *and be cleansed from all unrighteousnesse*. Words fetch the comfort to us, though it be the *blood of Christ only that hath paid the debt*.

Isa. 38. 3.

1 Iohn 1. 9.

Isa. 53. 5.

The end of the first Sermon.

THE SECOND SERMON.

Hos. 14. 2.

Take with you words, and turne to the Lord, say unto him take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, so will we render the Calves of our lips.

SO we lost our selves in the first *Adam*, so the mercy of God in the Covenant of Grace found out a way to restore us againe by the second *Adam* Jesus Christ, in whom all the Promises *are yea and Amen, yesterday and to day, and the same for ever.* And as the wisdome of God

did freely find out this way at first comforting our first Parents with it in *Paradice*: so this bowells of incomprehensible love of his, hath so gon on from time in all ages of the Church, comforting and raising up the dejected spirits of his Church from time to time, and awakening them out of their drowsinesse and sleepie condition. And many times the greater sinners he dealt with, the greater mercies and tender bowells of compassion were opened unto them, in many sweet and gratious promises tendering forgivenesse, and inviting to Repentance, as here in this Chapter and whole Prophecie is shewed: what Tribe so wicked, so full of Idolatry and Rebellion as *Ephraim*, and yet here *Ephraim* and *Israel* are taught a lesson of Repentance: as the tender Nurse feeds her childe and puts meate in its mouth, so here the Lord puts words in the mouth of this Rebellious people.

Take with you words and turne unto the Lord.

Object. What neede God words, hee knowes our hearts before we speake unto him?

Answ. Its true, God neede no words, but we doe, to stirre up our hearts and affections: and because he will have us take shame unto our selves; having given us our tongues as an instrument of glorifying him, he will have our glory used in our Petitions and Thankesgivings: and therefore, in regard of our selves, he will (as was said) have us take words unto our selves; for exciting of the graces of God in us by words, blowing up of the affections, and for manifestation of the

Why we must bring words with us though God knowes our minde.

hidden

hidden man of the heart: God will be glorified by the outward as well as by the inward man. SER. II.

And Turne to the Lord.

He repeates the exhortation of Returning, to ſhew, that *words muſt not be empty, but ſuch as are joyned with a purpoſe of turning to God:* for otherwiſe to turne to him with a purpoſe to live in any ſin, is the extremity of prophane impudence; to come to aske a pardon of the King, with a reſolution to live ſtill in Rebellion againſt him, what is this but mockery, as if one ſhould come with a dagg to ſhoote him. Such is our caſe, when we come to aske forgiveneſſe with a purpoſe to offend. It is the extremity of prophaneneſſe to come to aske a pardon, to the intent that we may ſin ſtill: therfore he repeates it againe; *Take unto you words, and turne to the Lord.* The *Forme* is,

That words and purpoſes muſt concurre in Prayer.

Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciouſly; or (Doe good to us) *So will we render the Calves of our lips.* Wherein we have

1. A *Petition* { 1. *To take away all iniquity.* 2. *To receive them gratiouſly.*

2. A *Reſtipulation*, or promiſe of thankfullneſſe backe againe to the Lord: *So will we render the Calves of our lips.* So that wee may obſerve hence

What God will grant us, he will have us aske of him: yet for all theſe things I will be ſought unto of the houſe of Iſrael, ſaith God: becauſe he will have us acknowledge our homage and dependance upon him: therefore we muſt aske what

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he hath purposed to give. *Take away all iniquity, &c.* where there is an implication of a confession of their sins and great iniquities: *Take away iniquity*; and *Take away all iniquity*: that is, our manifold guilt. So *before Petition there must be a free and full Confession*, as was shewed before.

Of Confession, how it is to be done, and unto whom.

Now this Confession here, is made to God, and to God onely (saith *Austin* in this case). Because it is a point in controversie, it is good to heare what the Ancients say. There are a curious sort of men, who are busie to search into other mens lives, and are careless in amending their own. Saith he, *What have I to doe with men to heare me confesse, when I have offended God: wee must confesse to God, and to God onely.* But in some cases there may be publique and private Confession to men. Publique, in publique offences for the satisfaction of the Church and the glory of God, for preventing of scandall. Private, to Ministers for the quieting of conscience: but this is onely in some cases; men goe not to the Chirurgeon (as the Papists would have it) for every little prick of their finger. No, but yet in some cases it is good to open the matter to a Minister who hath the tongue of the learned: but the sinne is toward God, against him; he onely being able to forgive sinnes, as the *Pharisees* confessed, *None can forgive sinnes but God*; the Papists therefore herein are worse then the Pharisees.

Augustin. on Confession.

Simile.

Mark. 2 7.

The *Petition* is, *Take away iniquity*, and *all iniquity*.

iniquity. Why *all*? becauſe where there is any true goodneſſe in the heart, that hatred which carries the bent of the ſoule againſt one ſinne, is alike againſt all (as I ſhewed) and the Divell carries thouſands to hell by this partiall obedience; becauſe he knowes at any time where to have ſuch. God and a purpoſe to ſinne will not ſtand together, nor dwell in a heart that allowes it ſelf in any ſin, be it never ſo ſmall. He ſaith, *Take away all*, becauſe the Spirit of God workes in a man renewed ſuch a diſpoſition of ſincerity to hate all alike.

SER. II.

Why all iniquity is prayed againſt.

1. *In a ſincere ſoule all are alike hated.*

Secondly, he ſaith, *Take away all iniquity*, becauſe the heart which deſires to be at peace with God, deſires alſo to be like God, who hates all ſinne: therefore (ſaith the ſanctified ſoule) forgive all ſin, Take all away, that I may have nothing in me diſpleaſing unto thee: I deſire to joyne with the Lord, to hate what he hateth, and as he hateth, to carrie a perfect hatred to the whole kinde. *Take away all iniquity*, hatred is not ſatisfied, but with the utter aboliſhing of the thing hated. Therefore it hath this extent here, *Take away all* ſin; both the guilt and the reigne of every ſin, that none may rule in mee, nay, by little and little purge out all: *Take away iniquity*, and the traine of all which it drawes after it, *Iudgements*. *Take away iniquity*; that is, forgive the ſin, and overcome the power of it by ſanctifying grace, and remit the judgements attending it.

2. *Becauſe a renewed ſoule deſires to be like God.*

SER. II.

Sinne hateſull to a conſcience awaked.

Take it away.

That is, take away the guilt of it utterly by pardon, and the remainders thereof by ſanctifying grace, ſo as the Spirit may rule and be all in all in us. They ſee ſinne is an offenſive thing, and therefore they ſay, *Take it away*, as an offenſive odious thing, and as a burden. For howſoever it be ſweet as honey in the committing it, afterwards when the conſcience is throughly awaked it is moſt offenſive and bitter; ſo as in this caſe, a ſinner would gladly run from his owne conſcience, and from himſelfe, run any where from the tormenting and racking thoughts of conſcience awaked: and withall hates the place where it was committed, and the company with whom, yea the thoughts of them, as *Abſolom* hated *Thamar* after hee had lyen with her, ſo a ſinner awaked from ſin, hates what hee formerly loved. As good men love the circumſtances of any thing which puts them in mind of any good they have done, loving both place and perſon. So it is with a ſinner when his conſcience is awaked, he hates all things which puts him in minde of his ſins, therfore, *Take it away*, forgive it, caſt it into the bottome of the Sea, blot it out of thy remembrance, cover it, impute it not, all which phraſes ſhew a taking away.

Triall of a ſound deſire of forgiveneſſe.

Therefore, I beſeech you, let us examine our ſelves hereby, whether our deſire of forgiveneſſe be ſound or not, if we deſire ſin ſhould be taken away, we cannot thinke of it with comfort. For in

in that many thinke with delight of their old sins, what doe they else, but repeate them over againe and againe? but where the heart is soundly touched with a saving sense of sinne; O then he cries, Take it away, Take it out of my conscience that it cause not despaire there, and out of thy remembrance, that no advantage be taken against me for it. *Take it away.* But it is no otherwise taken away then by satisfying of divine justice. How much are we beholding to Christ therefore, who hath borne and taken away our sins, (and as the Scape-goate) gon away with the burden of all into the wildernesse of oblivion. Blessed be God, and the Lamb of God that takes away the sinnes of the world. We can never blesse God too much nor sufficiently for Christ. *Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Iesus Christ.* Now wee may thinke of sin without shame and despaire: O blessed state, when a man can thinke of his former odious and filthy loathsome sinnes, and yet not despaire: Because when he beleeves in Christ, the blood of Christ purgeth all away, takes away all sin. He hath taken them away.

That a true Convert first begs mercy above all.

You see here in the first place, they pray for the taking away of their iniquity, for take away this, and all other mercies follow after: because this onely is it which stops the current of Gods favours, which remooved, the current of his mercies run amaine. As when the clouds are gone, the Sun shines out: So let our sinnes be remooved, and Gods favour immediately shines

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ſhines upon us. Therefore firſt, *Take away all iniquity*; and then we ſhall ſee nothing but thy Fatherly face in Chriſt. You ſee what the care of Gods children is to ſeeke mercy and favour in the firſt place: as *David*, *Pſal.* 51.1. *Have mercy on me, O Lord:* this he begs firſt of all, whereas God had threatned other terrible judgements, as that the ſword ſhould never depart from his houſe, *&c.* yet he neglects all (as it were) and begs onely for mercy, *to take away iniquity*. For, a ſinner is never in ſuch a bleſſed condition as he ſhould be in, untill he prize and deſire mercy above all; becauſe though we be in miſery, untill then (with ſinfull *Ephraim*) *Hoſ.* 7.14. wee howle upon our beds for corne and wine, preferring earthly ſenſuall things before all. But that ſoule and conſcience which is acquainted with God and the odiouſneſſe of ſin, that ſoule God intends to ſpeake peace unto in the end, deſires pardon of ſinne and mercy above all, for it knowes that God is goodneſſe it ſelfe, and that when the interpoſing clouds are vaniſhed, God cannot ſhew himſelfe otherwiſe, then in goodneſſe, grace and mercy. *Take away all iniquity.*

Queſt. Before I goe further, let me anſwer one Queſtion. *Ought wee not to thinke of our former ſinnes, ſhall God take them away altogether out of the ſoule?*

Anſw. O no! Take them away out of the conſcience O Lord that it doe not accuſe for them, but not out of the memory: it is good that ſinne be remembred, to humble us, to make us more thankfull, pitifull and tender-hearted unto

unto others, to abaſe us and keepe us low all the daies of our life, and to make us deale gently and mercifully with others being ſenſible of our own frailties. As they are naught in the conſcience, ſo they are good to the memory. Therfore let us think often of this, what the chiefe deſire of our ſoules to God ſhould be for *mercy*, to have ſin taken away. In all the Articles of our Creed, that of cheefeſt comfort is, That of *Remiſſion of ſins*. Wherefore are all the other Articles of Chriſt, his Birth, Death, and Crucifying, but that he might get the Church, and that the priviledges thereof might be, *Forgiveneſſe of ſins, Reſurrection of the Body, and life everlaſting:* but *Forgiveneſſe of ſins* is in the firſt place.

Queſt. But may ſome ſay, How ſhall I know whether or no my ſins be forgiven?

1. By ſomething that goes before.
2. By ſomething which followes after.

Anſw. There is ſomewhat which goes before, *viz.* 1. *An humble and hearty Confeſſion*, as 1 *Ioh.* 1. 9. *if wee confeſſe our ſinnes, hee is faithfull and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſſe:* therefore, whether I feele it or not, if I have heartily, fully, and freely confeſſed; my ſins are forgiven. God in wiſedome and mercy may ſuſpend the feeling thereof, for our humiliation, and for being over-bold with Satans baites; yet I ought to beleeve it, for I make God a lier elſe, if I confeſſe heartily, and acknowledge my debt, to thinke that he hath not cancel'd the bond.

1. By an humble confeſſion.

Se-

Sect. II.

2. *When we finde strength against it.* Mat. 9. 2, 6.

Secondly, sin is certainely pardoned, when a man finds strength against it, for where God forgives, he gives strength withall: as to the man whom he healed of the Palsie, *Thy sinnes are forgiven thee, take up thy bed and walke.* When a man hath strength to returne to God, to run the way of his Commandements, and to go on in a Christian course, his sinnes are forgiven, because he hath a Spirit of faith to go on and leade him forward still. Those who find no strength of grace, may question forgiveneſſe of sins, for God where he takes away sin, and pardons it (as we see here in this Text, after prayer made to *take away iniquity*) he *doth good to us.*

3. *Some peace of conscience.*

The third evidence is, some peace of Conscience, though not much perhaps, yet so much as supports us from despaire, as *Rom.* 5. 1. *Therefore being justified by faith, wee have peace with God through our Lord Iesus Christ*, that is, being acquitted from our sins by faith, we have peace with God: so much peace, as makes us goe boldly to him: so that one may know his bonds are cancel'd and his sins forgiven, when with some boldneſſe he dare looke God in the face in Jesus Christ. A *Iudas*, an *Achitophell*, a *Saul*, because they are in the guilt of their sinnes cannot confeſſe comfortably and go to God: which when with some boldneſſe we can do, it is a signe that peace is made for us.

4. *By love to God*

Againe, where sin is pardoned, our hearts will be much inlarged with love to God, as Christ said to the woman, *Luke* 7. 47. *Her sinnes which*

are

are many, are forgiven her, because shee loved much. Therefore, when wee find our hearts inflamed with love to God, we may know that God hath shined upon our soules in the pardon of sinne, and proportionably to our measure of love, is our assurance of pardon, therefore wee should labour for a greater measure thereof, that our hearts may be the more inflamed in the love of God. It is impossible that the soule should at all love God angry, offended, and unappeased, nay, such a soule wisheth that there were no God at all, for the very thoughts thereof terrifie him.

5. *By mercifulnes to others.*

Againe, where sinne is forgiven, it frames the soule suetably to be gentle, mercifull and to pardon others, for usually those who have peaceable consciences themselves, are peaceable unto others, and those who have forgivenesse of sins, can also forgive others; those who have found mercy, have mercifull hearts, shewing that they have found mercy with God. And on the contrary, hee that is a cruell mercilesse man, it is a signe that his heart was never warmed nor melted with the sense of Gods mercy in Christ. Therefore, *as the Elect of God* (saith the Apostle) *put on bowels of compassion*: as you will make it good that you are the Elect of God, members of Christ, and Gods children.

Their miserable condition who have not forgiveneſſe of sinnes.

Therefore, let us labour for the forgiveneſſe of our sinnes, that God would remoove and subdue the power of them, take them away and the judgements due to them, or else we are but miserable

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Ill. of bondage of our free Is sin.

miserable men, though we enjoyed all the pleasures of the world, which to a worldly man are but like the liberty of the Tower to a condemned Traitor, who though hee have all wants supplied, with all possible attendance: yet when he thinkes of his estate, it makes his heart cold, dampes his courage, and makes him thinke the poorest Carman or tankerd-bearer (at liberty) happier then hee, who would not change estates with him. So it is with a man that hath not sued out his pardon nor is at peace with God, he hath no comfort so long as he knowes his sins are on the file, that God in heaven is not at peace with him, who can arme all the Creatures against him to be revenged of him; in which case, who shall be Umpire betwixt God and us, if we take not up the controversie betwixt him and our soules. Therefore it being so miserable a case to want assurance of the forgivenesse of sinnes; it should make us be never an houre quiet till we have gotten it; seeing the uncertainty of this life, wherein there is but a step betwixt Hell, Damnation and us. Therefore, sue unto God, plie him with broken and humble hearts, that he would pardon all the sins of our youth and after age, knowne and unknowne, that he would pardon all whatsoever: *Take away all iniquity.*

And do good to us.

For so it is in the Originall, but it is all one, *Receive us graciously, and do good to us.* All the goodnesse wee have from God it is out of his grace,

grace, from his free grace and goodnesse, all grace, every little thing from God is grace: as we say of favours received of great persons, this is his grace, his favour; so this is a respect which is put upon all things which we receive from God (when wee are in Covenant) all is gratious. Take we the words as they are (the more plaine) in the Originall. *Take good, and doe good to us*: take good out of thy Treasure of goodnesse, and doe good to us, bestow upon us thy owne good. First, *Take away our iniquities*, and then take good out of thy bounty *and doe good to us*, whence we see,

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Doct. That Gods mercy to his children is compleate and full.

Doct. That Gods favours are compleate to his children.

For he takes away ill, and doth good, men may pardon but withal they think that they have done wondrous bountifully when they have pardoned, but Gods goes further, hee takes away ill and doth good: takes good out of his Fountaine, and doth good to us.

Use of incouragement.

Therefore let us make this use of it, to be encouraged when we have the first blessing of all (Forgivenesse of sinnes) to goe to him for more and more, and gather upon God further and further still, for because hee is a Fountaine of goodnesse that can never be drawne drie, hee is wondrously pleased with this. Wee cannot honour him more then by making use of his mercy in the forgivenesse of sinnes, and of his goodnesse, in going to him for it, and having interrested our selves in his goodnesse, goe to

him

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him for more. Lord, thou hast begun, make an end, thou hast forgiven my sinnes, I want this and that good, together with the pardon of my sinnes doe mee good. *Receive us graciously: or, doe us good.* Now good is the load-stone of the soule, the attractive that drawes it, therefore (after Forgivenesse of sinnes) he saith, *doe good.* The Petition is easie, God will soone grant it, for nothing else interposeth betwixt God and us, and makes two, but sinne; which being removed, he is all goodnesse and mercy. *All his waies are mercy and truth.* Yea even his sharpest waies are mercy, all mercy; when sin is forgiven, there is goodnesse in all, in the greatest crosse and affliction. *Doe good to us.*

That good is the load-stone of the soule.

Psal. 25. 10.

That God appeares to bee good onely to a sanctified soule.

The soule wee see desires *good*, and needs *good*; It is a transcendent word here, and must be understood according to the taste of Gods people, of a sanctified soule. *Doe good*, especially doe spirituall good to us, together with the forgivenesse of sinnes, give us the righteousnesse of Jesus Christ; sanctifying grace, such good, as may make us good first; for the desire must be such as the person is who makes it. Wicked men (as it is said of *Balaam*) have good gifts, without the good God: but we must not be so pleased with gifts, unlesse wee be good our selves, and see God making us good. *Can an evill tree bring forth good fruit?* Therefore the Apostle calls the regenerate person *Gods workmanship, &c.* We are Gods good worke, and then wee doe good workes, being made good,

Mat. 7. 18.

good

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That asking of good, argues the ingenuity of confessing want and emptinesse.

good comes from us. *Doe good to us.*

It is an acknowledgement of their owne emptinesse, *Doe good to us.* Wee are blinde in our owne understandings, inlighten us; we are perplexed, set us right; we are dull, quicken us; we are empty, fill us; we are darke, shine upon us; we are ready to goe out of the way, establish us; every way doe good to us suitable to our wants. The best that we can bring to thee is emptinesse, therefore doe thou doe good to us, fill us with thy fullnesse. Doe good to us every way whereby thou usest to convey spirituall things to thy servants soules: give us first thy grace, thy Spirit, which is the spring of al good things; for the Spirit of God is a Spirit of direction, of strength, of comfort, and all: therefore he who hath the Spirit of God hath the spring of all: that is beg'd in the first place. And then give us good Magistrates to rule us well; and good Ministers, who are the dispensers of grace, instruments of our salvation, the Conduit-pipes whereby thou deriveſt and conveyest good to us; when thou hast made us good, continue the meanes of salvation for our good every way. The Church when she saith, *Doe good to us*, hath a large desire; here be seeds of wondrous large things in these two short petitions, *Take away all iniquity, And do good to us. A Bono Deo, &c.* From the good God nothing can come but what is good: therefore do good to us in all spirituall things. The Prophet *David* aimes at this excellent good, *Psal.* 4. 6, 7. saying

that other men are for corne, wine and oyle, and say; *who will shew us any good? But Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.* Thy loving kindnesse is better then life, therefore doe good to us. When thou hast forgiven our sins, shine graciously upon us in Jesus Christ.

In the good desired outward prosperity is also included.

And it extends its limits likewise to outward prosperity (this desire of doing good) let us have happie daies, sweeten our pilgrimage here, let our profession of Religion be comfortable, do not lay more crosses upon us then thou wilt give us strength to beare, doe good to us every way. But marke the wisedome of the Holy Ghost in dictating of this Prayer to them: hee speakes in generall, *do good to us*; not to doe this or that good, but he leaves it to the wisedome of God, as they here frame their hearts unto the will of God. *Doe good to us*, spirituall, that needs no limitation, because we cannot more honour God then to depend upon him for all spirituall good things. Thou art wiser, and knowest what is good for us better then we our selves, beggars ought to be no choosers, therefore *Do good to us*; for the particulars wee leave them to thy wisedome. O Beloved, it is a happy and blessed priviledge to be under the conduct of so wise and All-sufficient a God, who is good, and as he is good, knowes best what is good for us. Wee would have riches, liberty and health, but it may be it is not good for us, *Do good to us.* Thou Lord knowest what is best, doe in thine owne wisedome what is best.

Which

Which ſhould teach us not to limit the Holy one of Iſrael in our deſires of any outward thing whatſoever. Eſpecially deſire forgiveneſſe and ſpirituall good things leaving the reſt to his wiſe diſpoſing. Yet notwithſtanding out of the ſenſe of paine and griefe we may pray either for the mitigation or remooving of a croſſe, if God be ſo pleaſed; becauſe he hath put in us ſelfe-love; not ſinfull, but love of preſerving our nature; therefore he permits us (if it may ſtand with his good pleaſure) to deſire the good of our outward man, as, Lord give us bodily health, for we cannot elſe be inſtruments of ſerving thee. With reſervation of Gods good pleaſure, we may deſire ſuch and ſuch things; conditionally, that when we ſee God will have it otherwiſe, wee reſt contented, ſit downe quietly, knowing that whatſoever health, ſickneſſe or croſſes he ſends, it comes from his goodneſſe and love, and ſhall turne to our good at length: if we love God, all ſhall worke for good.

Take away our iniquity and doe us good, wee ſhould make this petition for the Church and our ſelves, pardon our ſins and do good to us, to our perſons, to the ſtate, to the times wherein we live, to the Church at home and abroad, doe good to all.

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And we may obſerve this from the order; and know, what good wee have, it comes from God in love, when it comes after forgiveneſſe of ſinnes. How then may wee take comfort of all the good things we have enjoyed, having ſeene

How to know when bleſſings enioyed come from Gods love

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many good daies, enjoyed many good blessings, in health, wealth, good Magistracie, Ministery, Peace, plenty and the like? If all this goodnesse of God leade us to God, and draw us neerer unto him *after forgivenesse of sinnes* (grounded on the former evidences I spake of) then they come in love. But never let us thinke to have true comfort with a blessing, or any good thing wee enjoy, till wee have assurance of Gods love and mercy in the forgivenesse of sinnes; least God strip us naked of all the good things wee have, and make us as naked as *Dives* in Hell, who had not (any thing that was good) to refresh his body or soule. So that all good things wee enjoy here without this, will onely aggravate our condemnation. Let us observe therefore, how all our good things are joyned with spirituall good, whether we our selves are made better by them or not, having our sins pardoned. I beseech you let us renew our requests for forgivenesse of sins every day, making our accounts even with God: desiring grace to set our soules in a holy and sanctified frame with God, that our selves may be good, our conversation good: and that then, he would *doe good to us* all other waies, and sanctifie all other things. This is the Method of Gods Spirit in setting us right onwards in our heavenly journey: first to have forgivenesse of sinnes, then sanctification: to be better our selves, and then to looke for peaceable and comfortable daies in this world, if God see it good. What can be more? *Take away*

all

all iniquity, and do us good: all manner of good.

Therefore since all *good* comes from God, the first and chiefe good, let us labour to have communion with him by all sanctified meanes, that so he may take away our ill, and do us every way good, to our soules, bodies, conditions. O what a blessed thing is it for a Christian to keep a strict and neere communion with the fountaine of goodnesse, who can do more for us then all the world besides. When we are sick on our death-beds, or when conscience is throughly awaked, then to speake peace comfortably to us in this great extremity, is more worth then all this world. Therefore let us labour to keep communion with God, that he may speake peace to our soules when nothing else can.

I beseech you therefore let us take heed, how we breake or walke loosely with God, seeing wee can have no further comfort of any good thing we enjoy, then wee are carefull to keep and maintaine our peace and communion with him at all times; and when we run into arrerages with God, then be sure we lie not in sinne, but say, *Take away all iniquity, and doe good to us*, labouring to be in such an estate, as God may give us his holy Spirit, both to make us good, and to sanctifie unto us all other good. There be good things, which are good of themselves, and which make all other things good. Thus by communion with God, wee our selves are made good, and all other things likewise are made good to us: all his waies being

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being mercy and truth unto those who feare him. Therefore resigne we our selves and all that we have unto his wisedome and disposing: because oftimes there is good, where we imagine the worst of evills to be: as it is sometimes good to have a veine opened, to be purged, the Physitian thinks so, when yet the Patient, impatient of Reasons issue, thinkes not so; But as the Physitian is wiser then the Patient to know what is best for him; so God is wiser then man to know what is good for him, who intends us no hurt when he purgeth us by affliction.

Simile.

All our care therefore should be, to annihilate our selves, to come with empty poore soules to God, *Doe good to us.* In which case, it is no matter what our ill be, if he doe us good; who hath both pardon and rich grace to remoove the evill of sinne, and convey all grace unto us out of his rich Treasury.

So will we render the Calves of our lips.

Here is the *Restipulation*, or promise, they Returne back againe to God: for there is no friendship maintained without rendring: when God hath entred into Covenant with us; then there is a kinde of friendship knit up betwixt him and us (he becomming our friend) We must not therefore be like graves to swallow up all and returne nothing; for then the intercourse betwixt God and us is cut off. Therefore the same Spirit which teacheth them to pray, and to *Take to them words*; teacheth them likewise to take unto them *words of Praise*, that there may be a *Rendring*, according

cording to *Receiving*; without which we are worſe then the pooreſt creature that is, which rendreth according to its receit. The *Earth* (when it is plowed and ſowed) it yeelds us fruit. *Trees* being ſet, yeeld increaſe: Beaſts being fed, render in their kind: yea the fierceſt untamed Beaſts, (as we reade of the Lyon) have beene thankfull in their kinde; The Heavens (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) declare the glory of God and the firmament ſhewes forth his Praiſe. So there muſt be a Returne, if we be not worſe then beaſts. Therefore the Church here promiſeth a Returne by the ſame Spirit which ſtirred her up to pray. *So will wee render the Calves of our lips.* Pſal. 19. 10.

Now this promiſe which the Church makes here of praiſe is a kind of vow: *So will we render, &c.* To binde ones ſelfe is a kinde of vow. The Church therefore bindes her ſelfe that ſhe may binde God; for binding her ſelfe by vow to Thankfullneſſe, ſhe thereby bindes God, who is mooved with nothing *wee* can doe ſo much as with ſetting forth of his Praiſe, which was his end in all the Creation, the ſetting forth of his glory. The end of the new Creature, is the end of all things both in nature and grace; the end wherof is Gods glory from whence all things come, and wherein all things end: as we ſay of a circle, all things begin and end in it. All other things are for man, and man for Gods glory; when the ſoule can ſay, Lord, this ſhall be for thy honour, to ſet forth thy praiſe, it bindes God. Hence that they might moove God to yeeld to their prayers,

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they bind themselves by a kind of vow; Doe thus, O Lord, and thou shalt not loose by it, thou shalt have praise, *So will we render thee the Calves of our lips.*

So Promises and vowes of praise are alleadged as an argument to prevaile with God, for the obtaining of that the Church begs for; *So will we render, &c.* Not to enter into the common place of vowes, onely this much I say, that there is a good use of them, to vow and promise Thankefullnesse when we would obtaine blessings from God. That which a promise is to men, that a vow is to God; and usually they go together in Scripture, as *Psal.* 132. 2. It is said of *David*, That *he vowed unto God, and sware unto the mighty God of Iaakob.* So we have all in Baptisme vowed a vow, so that it is good to renew our vowes often, especially that of new obedience, and in this particular, to vow unto him, that we will praise him, and strive that his glory be no looser by us.

Helpes and use of vowes.

1. *To excite, and quicken our dullnesse.*

It is good thus to vow, if it were but to excite, and quicken our dullnesse and forgetfullnesse of our generall vow; to put us in mind of our duty, the more to oblige us to God and refresh our memories. This bond, that having promised, now I must do it, provokes the soule to it, as it helpes the memory, so it quickens the affections.

2. *To be a bridle to our inconstancy.*

Besides, as by nature, we are forgetfull, so we are inconstant, in which respect, it is a tie to our inconstant and unsteady nature, for there are none who have the Spirit of God at all with any tendernesse of heart, but will thus thinke; I have vowed

vowed to God, if it be a heinous thing to breake with men, what is it wittingly and willingly to break with the great God? a vow is a kinde of oath; this is the ſacrifice of fooles, to come to God, and yet neither to make good our vowes, nor indeavour to doe it.

Let us conſider therfore, what we have done in this caſe. By permiſſion of authority there was a Faſt lately when we all renewed our vowes (we mocked God elſe) received the Communion. Will God be mocked think you? No, but howſoever man may forget, God will not, but will come upon us, for *non*-payment of our vowes and Covenants. Lay we it to heart therefore what Covenants we have made with God of late. And then, for the time to come, be not diſcouraged if you have been faulty in it. There is a generall vow, wherein though we have failed (if we be his children and breake not with God in the maine, cleaving to him in purpoſe of heart, occaſionally renewing our purpoſes and Covenants) yet let not Satan diſcourage us for our unfaithfullneſſe therein; but be aſhamed of it, watch more; looke better to it for the time to come, and make uſe of the gratious Covenant; and upon recovery, ſay with the Church. *So will wee render the Calves of our lips.*

It was the cuſtome under the Jewiſh pollicie (you know) to offer ſacrifices of all ſorts. But the Spirit of God ſpeakes here of the Church of the Jewes under the New Teſtament, eſpecially what they ſhould be after their Converſion, having

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ving reference to the Jewes in Christs time, and to the beleeving Jewes in all times, implying this much, howsoever not Legall sacrifices, of *Calves, Bullocks, Sheepe* and *Lambes*, yet the *Calves of the lips*, which God likes better, are acceptable to him. And it likewise implies some humiliation of the Church. Lord, whatsoever else we could offer unto thee it is thine owne, though it were the beasts upon a thousand mountaines; but this (by thy grace) we can do, to *Praise thee*. For God must open and circumcise our lips and hearts, before we can offer him *the Calves of our lips*. Thus much the poorest creature in the world may say to God, Lord, *I will render thee the Calves of my lips*, other things I have not, this I have by thy gratious Spirit, a heart somewhat touched by the sense of thy favour: therefore, *I will render thee the Calves of my lips*, that is, *Praise*, as the Apostle hath it. *Heb.* 13. 15. *By him therefore let us offer the Sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thankes to his Name.* [*So will we render thee the Calves of our lips*] Whence the point is,

Pſal. 50.

Xtian. Sacrifice

Doct. *That Gods children at al times have their Sacrifices.*

There is indeed one kinde of Sacrificing determined, and finished by the comming of Christ, who was the last Sacrifice of propitiation for our sins. The more to blame those, who yet maintaine a daily Sacrifice, not of laud and praise, but of cozening and deluding the world, in saying masse for the sins of the quick and the dead, all such Sacrifices being finished and closed up in him

him (our bleſſed Saviour) who, *by one Sacrifice* (as the Apoſtle ſpeakes) *hath perfected them that are ſanctified*: and that, *By one Sacrifice when hee offered up himſelfe*; when all the Jewiſh Sacrifices ended, ſince which, all ours are but a commemoration of Chriſts laſt Sacrifice (as the Fathers ſay). The Lords Supper with the reſt: Which remaine ſtill, and the *Sacrifice of praiſe*, with a few others I deſire to name.

Serm. II.

Heb. 10. 14. Heb. 7. 27.

First, *The Sacrifice of a broken heart*, whereof *David* ſpeakes, *Pſal.* 51. 17. which Sacrifice of a wounded broken heart (by the knife of Repentance) pleaſeth God wondrouſly well.

1. *The Sacrifice of a broken heart.*

And then, *A broken heart that offers Chriſt to God every day*, who though he were offered once for all: yet our beleeving in him, and daily preſenting his Attonement made for us, is a new offering of him. Chriſt is Crucified and Sacrificed for thee as oft as thou beleeveſt in Chriſt Crucified. Now upon all occaſions we manifeſt our Beleefe in Chriſt, to waſh and bathe our ſelves in his blood, who juſtifieth the ungodly, ſo that upon a freſh ſight of ſin with contrition for it, he continually juſtifieth us. Thus when we Beleeve we offer him to God daily, a broken heart firſt, and then Chriſt with a broken heart.

2. *A broken heart offering Chriſt.*

And then when we beleeve in Chriſt, *we offer and ſacrifice our ſelves to God*, in which reſpect we muſt (as it were) be killed ere we be offered; for wee may not offer our ſelves as wee are in our luſts, but as mortified and killed by Repentance. Then we offer our ſelves to God as a reaſo-

3. *Our ſelves.*

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reaſonable and living ſacrifice, when wee offer our ſelves wholy unto him, wit, underſtanding, judgement, affections and indeavour, as *Paul* ſaith of the *Macedonians, they gave themſelves to God firſt, and then their goods.* 2 Cor. 8. 5. In ſumme, it is that Sacrifice *Paul* ſpeakes of, *Rom.* 12. 1. *To preſent our bodies a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, &c.* for a Chriſtian who beleeveth in the Lord Jeſus, is not his owne, but ſacrificeth himſelfe to him that was Sacrificed for him. As Chriſt is given to us, ſo hee that beleeves in Chriſt gives himſelfe backe againe to Chriſt. Hereby a man may know if he be a true Chriſtian, and that Chriſt is his; if he yeelds up himſelfe to God; for, *Chriſt died and roſe againe,* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *that he might be Lord both of quick and dead.* Therfore (ſaith he) *whether wee live or die, we are not our own,* what we do or ſuffer in the world, in all we are Sacrificed, ſo ſaith a ſanctified ſoule; my wit, my will, my life, my good, my affections are thine, of thee I received them; and I reſigne all to thee as a Sacrifice. Thus the Martyrs to ſeale the Truth (as a Sacrifice) yeelded up their blood. He that hath not obtained of himſelfe ſo much, as to yeeld himſelf to God, he knowes not what the Goſpell meanes; for Chriſtian Religion is not onely to beleeve in Chriſt for forgiveneſſe of ſin, but the ſame faith which takes this great benefit, renders back our ſelves in liew of Thankfullneſſe.

So that, whatſoever we have (after we Beleeve) we give all back againe. Lord, I have my life,

life, my will, my wit and all from thee, and to thee I returne all back againe: for when I gave my ſelfe to beleeve in thy deare Sonne, I yeelded my ſelfe and all I have to thee: and now having nothing but by thy gift; if thou wilt have all, I will returne all unto thee againe; if thou wilt have my life, my goods, my liberty thou ſhalt have them. This is the ſtate of a Chriſtian who hath denied himſelfe, for wee cannot beleeve as we ſhould, unleſſe we denie our ſelves. Chriſtianity is not altogether in beleeving this and that, but the faith which mooves mee to beleeve Forgiveneſſe of ſinnes, carries us alſo unto God, to yeeld all back againe to him. Serm. II.

More eſpecially, among the Sacrifices of the New Teſtament, are Almes, as *Heb.* 13. 16. *To do good, and to communicate forget not, for with ſuch Sacrifices God is well pleaſed.* 4. *Almes-deeds.*

And (among the reſt) *The Sacrifice of Praiſe*, which is in the ſame Chapter ver. 15. firſt, he ſaith, *by him* (that is, by Chriſt) *let us offer the ſacrifice of praiſe to God continually*, that is, *The fruit of our lips*, which is but an expoſition of this place, which becauſe it is eſpecially here intended; I will a little inlarge my ſelfe in. 5. *The Sacrifice of Praiſe.*

The *Calves of our lips*, implies two things:

Not onely Thankfullneſſe to God;

But glorifying of God, in ſetting out his praiſe; otherwiſe to thanke God for his goodneſſe to us, or for what we hope to receive, without glorifying of him, is nothing at all worth. For in glorifying there are two things.

1. *A*

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1. *A ſuppoſition of Excellencie,* for that cannot be glorified which hath no excellencie in it; glory in ſublimity, hath alway excellencie attending it. And

2. *The manifeſtation of this glory.*

Now when al the excellencies of God as they are, are diſcovered and ſet out, his *Wiſedome, Mercy, Power, Goodneſſe, All-ſufficiencie, &c.* then we glorifie him. To praiſe God for his favours to us, and accordingly to glorifie him, is *The Calves of our lips,* but eſpecially to praiſe him. Whence the point is,

That the yeelding of praiſe to God, is a wondrous acceptable Sacrifice.

Which is inſteed of all the Sacrifices of the Old Teſtament, then which, the greateſt can doe no more; nor the leaſt, leſſe, for it is the ſacrifice and fruit of the lips. But to open it, it is not meerely the ſacrifice of our lips; for the praiſe we yeeld to God it muſt be begotten in the heart. Hereupon the word (λογὸς) ſpeech ſignifieth both *Reaſon* and *Speech,* there being one word in the learned language for both. Becauſe, ſpeech is nothing but that ſtreame which iſſues from the ſpring of reaſon and underſtanding; therefore, in Thankeſgiving there muſt not be a lip-labour onely; but a Thankeſgiving from the lips, firſt begotten in the heart, comming from the inward man, as *Pſal.* 103. 1. The Prophet ſaith, *Bleſſe the Lord, O my ſoule, and all that is within mee, bleſſe his holy Name;* Praiſe muſt come from a ſound judgement of the worth of the

the thing we praise God for. It must come from an affection which desires that God may have the glory, by the powers of the whole inward man, which is a hard matter to rouze up our selves to praise God with all the powers of our soule, *all that is within me, praise his holy Name.* There goeth Judgement, Resolution of the will, strength of affections, and all with it.

And then againe, besides this, *The Calves of our lips,* carries us to work. The orall Thankesgiving must be justified by our workes and deeds; or else, our actions will give our tongue the lie, that we praise him with the one, but denie him in the other. This is a Sollociſme, as if one should look to the earth and cry O ye heavens: so when we say, God be praised, when yet our life speakes the contrary, it is a dishonouring of God. So the praise of our lips must be made good and justified by our life, actions, and conversation: this we must suppose for the full understanding of the words. *We will render* (from our hearts) *the Calves of our lips,* which we must make good in our lives and conversations, ever to set forth thy praise in our whole life.

Quest. *Why lips are mentioned for praise onely.*

But why doth the Prophet especially mention *lips*; *The Calves of our lips,* which are our words.

Answ.

1. Partly, *because Christ who is the Word, delights in our words.*

2. Because *our Tongue is our glory, and that whereby we glorifie God.*

3. And

SER. II.

3. And eſpecially, becauſe *our Tongue is that which excites others*

Being a trumpet of praiſe, ordained of God for this purpoſe. Therefore, *The Calves of our lips.* Partly, becauſe it ſtirres up our ſelves and others; and partly, becauſe God delights in words eſpecially of his owne dictating. To come then to ſpeake more fully of Praiſe and Thankeſgiving, let us conſider, what a ſweet, excellent and prevailing duty this is; which the Church (to bind God) promiſeth unto him, *The Calves of our lips.* I will not be long in the point, but only come to ſome helpes how wee may come to do it.

Helpes to praiſe God.

I.

It muſt bee from an humble broken heart.

Firſt, this Praiſing of God muſt be from an humble broken heart, the humble ſoule that ſees it ſelfe not worthy of any favour, and confeſſeth ſinne before God, is alway a thankfull ſoule. Take away our iniquity, and then doe good to us, we are empty our ſelves; Then will we render thee the Calves of our lips. What made *David* ſo thankfull a man? Hee was an humble man; and ſo *Iaakob*; what abaſed him ſo in his owne eyes? his humility; *Lord I am leſſe then the leaſt of thy mercies.* He that thinkes himſelfe unworthy of anything, will be thankfull for every thing, and hee who thinkes himſelfe unworthy of any bleſſing, will be contented with the leaſt. Therefore, let us worke our hearts to humility, in conſideration of our finnefullneſſe, vileneſſe, and unworthineſſe, which will make us thankfull, eſpecially of the beſt

Gen. 32. 10.

bleſſings,

bleſſings, when wee conſider their greatneſſe, and our unworthineſſe of them. A proud man can never be thankfull. Therefore that Religion which teacheth pride, cannot be a thankefull Religion, Popery is compounded of ſpirituall pride. *Merit of Congruity* before Converſion, *Merit of Condignity* and deſert of heaven after, Free-will and the like, to puffe up nature, what a Religion is this? muſt we light a candle before the divell? is not nature proud enough, but we muſt light a candle to it? to be ſpiritually proud is worſt of all.

2. *A due conſideration of the greatneſſe of the bleſſings.*

And with our owne unworthineſſe, add this, *a conſideration of the greatneſſe of the thing we bleſſe God for*: ſetting as high a price upon it as woe can, by conſidering what and how miſerable we were without it. He will bleſſe God joyfully for pardon of ſin who ſees how miſerable hee were without it, in miſery next to divels, ready to drop into hell every moment: and the more excellent we are, ſo much the more accurſed without the forgiveneſſe of ſinnes. For the ſoule by reaſon of the largeneſſe thereof, is ſo much the more capable and comprehenſible of miſery, as the divels are more capable then wee, therefore are moſt accurſed. O this will make us bleſſe God for the pardon of ſinne, and likewiſe, let us ſet a price upon all Gods bleſſings, conſidering what we were without our ſenſes, ſpeech, meate, drinke, reſt, *&c.* O beloved, we forget to praiſe God ſufficiently for our ſenſes. This little ſparke of Reaſon in us, is an

excellent thing; grace is founded upon it, if we were without Reason, what were we? If we wanted sight, hearing, speech, rest, and other daily blessings, how uncomfortable were our lives? This consideration will add and set a price to their worth, and make us thankfull to consider our misery without them. But (such is our corruption) that favours are more knowne by the want then by the enjoying of them, when too late we (many times) finde, how darke and uncomfortable we are without them, then smarting the more soundly, because in time we did not sufficiently prize, and were thankfull for them.

3e. *To get assurance that we are in Gods love.*

And then, *labour to get further and further assurance, that wee are Gods children, beloved of him:* this will make us thankefull, both for what we have and hope for. It lets out the life blood of Thankefullnesse to teach doubting, or falling from grace. What is the end I beseech you why the glory to come is revealed before the time? that we shall be sonnes and daughters; Kings and Queenes; heires and co-heires with Christ; and all that he hath is ours? Is not this knowledge revealed before hand, that our praise and thankesgiving should before hand be sutable to this Revelation? being set with Christ in heavenly places already. Whence comes those strong phrases, *we are raised with Christ; sit with him in heavenly Places: are translated from death to life: Transformed into his image: Partakers of the divine nature, &c.* If any thing that can come betwixt our beleeving and our sitting there could

Eph. 2. 6.
Col. 1. 13.
2 Pet. 1. 4.

could disappoint us thereof, or unsettle us, it may as well put Christ out of Heaven, for we sit with him. If wee yeeld to the uncomfortable Popish Doctrine of doubting, we cannot be heartily thankfull for blessings; for still there will rise in the soule surmises, I know not whether God favour me or not, it may be I am onely fatted for the day of slaughter, God gives mee outward things to damne me, and make me the more inexcusable; what a cooler of praise is this, to be ever doubting and to have no assurance of Gods favour? But when upon good evidence (which cannot deceive) wee have somewhat wrought in us distinct from the greater number of worldlings, Gods stampe set upon us, having evidences of the state of grace, by conformity to Christ, and walking humbly by the Rule of the Word in all Gods waies, Then we may heartily be thankfull, yea and we shall breake forth in Thankesgiving: this being an estate of *Peace*, and *joy unspeakeable and glorious*, wherein we take every thing as an evidence of Gods love.

That Popish Doctrine of doubting kills Thankfulnesse to God.

Thus, the assurance of our being in the state of grace, makes us thankfull for every thing: so by the contrary, being not in some measure assured of Gods love in Christ, wee cannot be Thankfull for every thing. For it will alwaies come in our minde, I know not how I have these things, and what account I shall give for them. Therefore, even for the honour of God, and that we may praise him the more cheerefully, let us

That assurance of being in the state of grace, is the nurse of Thankesgiving.

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labour to have further and further evidences of the state of grace, to make us thankfull both for things present and to come, seeing faith takes to trust things to come, as if it had them in possession: Whereby we are assured of this; that wee shall come to heaven, as sure as if we were there already. This makes us praise God before hand for all favours: as blessed *Peter* begins his Epistle, 1 Pet. 1. 3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Iesus Christ; which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us againe unto a lively hope, by the Resurrection of Iesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, &c.* As soone as we are new borne, we are begotten to a Kingdome, and an Inheritance: therefore assurance that we are Gods children, will make us thankfull for grace present and that to come, as if we were in Heaven already; we begin then the imployment of Heaven in thankesgiving here to praise God before hand with *Cherubims* and *Angels*. Let us then be stirred up, to give God his due before hand, to begin Heaven upon Earth; for wee are so much in heaven already as we abound and are conversant in thanksgiving upon earth.

The end of the second Sermon.

THE THIRD SERMON.

Hos. 14. 2, 3.

—So will we render the Calves of our lips. Assur shall not save us, we will not ride upon horses, neither will wee say any more to the works of our hands, ye are our gods, for in thee the Fatherlesse findeth mercy.

THE words (as wee heard heretofore) containe a most sweet and excellent forme of Returning unto God for miserable lost and forlorne sinners, wherin, so farre God discovers his willingnesse to have his people returne unto him, that he dictates unto them a forme of prayer, *Take with you words and*

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turne to the Lord, say unto him, Take away iniquity. Wherein we see how detestation of sin must be as generall as the desire of pardon: and that none heartily pray to God to *Take away all iniquity*, who have not grace truly to hate all iniquity. *And doe good to us*, or doe gratiously to us, for there is no good to us till sinne be removed, though God be goodnesse it self, there is no provoking or meriting cause of mercy in us; but he findes cause from his owne gratious nature and bowels of mercy, to pitie his poore people and servants. It is his nature to shew mercy, as the fire to burne, a spring to runne, the Sun to shine: Therefore it is easily done (as the Prophet speakes) *Who is a God like unto thee?*

Micah 7. 18.

Where we came to speake of the Restipulation, &c. *will we render the Calves of our lips*: where Gods favour shines there will be a reflection, love is not idle, but a working thing: it must render or die; and what doth it render? divers Sacrifices, of the New Testament which I spoke of, that of a broken heart, of Christ offered to the Father to stand betwixt Gods wrath and us, our selves as a living Sacrifice: Almes-deeds, and praise, which must be with the whole inward powers of the soule.

Praise is not comely in the mouth of a foole (saith the *Wiseman*) nor of a wicked man, as *Psal.* 50. 16, 17. saith God to such, *What hast thou to doe to take my words in thy mouth since thou hatest to be reformed, and hast cast my words behind thee?* There are accompany who are ordinary swearers, and filthy

filthy speakers; for them to praise God, *James* tells them, that these contrary streames cannot flow out of a good heart; O no: God requires not the praise of such fooles.

I gave you also some Directions how to praise God, and to stirre up your selves to this most excellent duty, which I will not insist on now, but add a little unto that I then delivered, which is, *That we must watch all advantages upon arising God from our disposition, to any service, to which* (saith *James*) O, it is a great point of wisedome, to take advantages with the streame of our temper to praise God. When he doth incourage us by his favours and blessings, and inlarge our spirits, then we are in a right temper to blesse him: let us not loose the occasion. This is one Branch of redeeming of time, to observe what state and temper of soule we are in, and to take advantage from thence. Is any man in *heavinesse?* he is fit to mourne for sin: let him take the opportunity of that temper. Is any disposed to *cheerefullnesse*, let him sacrifice that marrow, oyle, and sweetnesse of spirit to God. We see the poore birds in the spring-time, when those little spirits they have are cherished with the Sun-beames, how they expresse it in singing; so when God warmes us with his favours, let him have the praise of all.

To take advantages of our disposition *James* 5.13.

And here, I cannot but take up a lamentation of the horrible ingratitude of men, who are so farre from taking advantage by Gods blessings to praise him; that they fight (like Rebels)

A censure of those who take the advantage of Gods blessings to feed their lusts.

Sam.III.

against him with his owne favours. Those tongues which he hath given them for his glory, they abuse to pierce him with blasphemie, and those other benefits of his lent them to honour him with, they turne to his dishonour, like children, who importunately aske for divers things, which when they have, they throw them to the dog. So, favours they will have, which when they have obtained, they give them to the divell, unto whom they sacrifice their strength and cheerefullnesse, and cannot be merrie, unlesse they be mad and sinfull. Are these things to be tolerated in these daies of light? How few shall we finde who in a temper of mirth turne it the right way?

Incouragement to Praise God

But to add some incouragements to incite us to praise God, unto the former; I beseech you let this be one, That *we honour God by it*; it is a well-pleasing Sacrifice to him. If we would studie to please him, we cannot do it better then by praising him.

1. *We honour him by it.*

2. *It is the most gainfull trading,*

And *it is a gainfull trading with God*: for in bestowing his seed, where he findes there is improovement in a good soyle, with such a sanctified disposition as to blesse him upon all occasions, that there comes not a good thought, a good motion in the minde, but we blesse God who hath injected such a good thought in our heart: there I say God delights to shower downe more and more blessings, making us fruitfull in every good worke to the praise of his Name. Sometimes we shall have holy and

gratious

gratious persons make a law, that no good or holy motion shall come into their hearts which they will not be thankfull for. O, when God seeth a heart so excellently disposed, how doth it inrich the soule? It is a gainefull trade. As we delight to bestow our seed in soyles of great increase, which yeeld sixty and an hundred fold, if possible: so God delights in a disposition inclined to blesse him upon all occasions, on whom he multiplies his favours.

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And then, in it selfe; *it is a most noble act of Religion*, it being a more base thing to be alwaies begging of God; but it argueth a more noble, raised and elevated spirit to be disposed to praise God. And it is an argument of lesse selfe-love and respect, being therefore more gainefull to us. Yea, it is a more noble and royall disposition, fit for Spirituall Kings and Priests thus to Sacrifice.

3. *It is a most noble act of Religion.*

Againe, indeed *we have more cause to praise God then to pray, having many things to praise him for which wee never praid for*; Who ever prayed for his election, care of Parents in our infancy, their affection to us, care to breed and traine us to yeares of discretion; besides those many favours daily heaped upon us, above all that we are able to think or speake. Therefore *Praise* being a more large Sacrifice then Prayer, wee ought to be abundant in it. For those that begin not Heaven upon earth, of which this praise is a maine function, they shall never come to Heaven, after they are taken from the earth; for

4. *Because wee have more cause to give thankes then to pray.*

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for there is no heavenly action, but it is begun upon earth, especially this maine one, of joyning with Angels, Seraphims, and Cherubims in lauding God: Shall they praise him on our behalfe, and shall not wee for our owne? We see the Quire of Angels when Christ was borne, sang, *Glory be to God on high, on earth Peace, and good will towards men.* What was this for? Because Christ the Saviour of the world was borne, whereby they shew, that we have more benefit by it then they. Therefore if we would ever joyne with them in Heaven, let us joyne with them upon Earth; for this is one of the great priviledges mentioned by the Author to the *Hebrewes*, unto which we be come too, *Communion with the spirits of just men made perfect, and to the company of innumerable Angels:* we cannot better shew that we are come to that blessed estate and Society spoken of then by praising God.

Luke 2.14.

Heb. 12.22.

5. *Praising bringeth joy.*

And lastly, *If we be much in praising God, wee shall be much in joy,* which easeth misery; for a man can never be miserable, that can be joyfull, and a man is alway joyfull when hee is thankfull. When one is joyfull and cheerefull, what misery can lie upon him? Therefore it is a wondrous helpe in misery to stirre up the heart to this spirituall Sacrifice of Thankesgiving by all arguments, meanes and occasions. Our hearts are Temples, and we are Priests, we should alway therefore have this light & Incense burning in our hearts, as the fire did alway burne

on

on the Altar in *Moses* time, that wee may have these spirituall Sacrifices to offer continually. Where this is not, the heart of that man or woman, is like *the abhomination of desolation*, which (when the daily Sacrifice was taken away) was set up in the *Temple*. And certainely where there is not praising of God, the heart is *an abhominatiuall of desolation*, having nothing in it, save monsters of base lusts and earthly affections. Dan. 12. 11.

But how shall wee know that God accepts these Sacrifices of Praise? *Quest.*

How did hee witnesse the acceptation of those Sacrifices under the old Law? *by fire from Heaven*; this was ordinary with them. So if we finde our hearts warme, cheared and incouraged with joy, peace, and comfort in praising God; this is as it were a witnesse by fire from Heaven that our Sacrifices are accepted. Let this now said be effectuall, to stirre you up to this excellent and usefull duty of *Thanksgiving*, without multiplying of more Arguments; save to put you in minde of this, that as wee are exhorted to *delight our selves in the Lord*, one way (among the rest) to doe it, is to *serve him with cheerefullnesse*, it is an excellent thing to make us delight in God, who loves a cheerefull giver, and Thanksgiver. *So will we render the Calves of our lips*. But to proceed. *Answ.* *How to know when our Thanksgiving is accepted* Psal. 37. 4.

After this their solemne Covenant and promise of yeelding *Praise* to God, that if he would forgive all their sinnes and doe good to them; then he should have the best they could doe to him

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him againe, (Praiſe) Here is *A Promiſe of new Obedience*, which hath two Branches,

1. *A Renunciation of the ill courſes they took before.*

Aſſur ſhall not ſave us, wee will not ride upon Horſes, neither will wee ſay any more to the workes of our hands, ye are our gods.

2. *Then there is a Poſitive duty implied*, in theſe words;

For in thee, the Fatherleſſe findeth mercy.

Whereof, the one ſprings from the other; *Aſſur ſhall not ſave us, wee will not ride upon Horſes, neither will we ſay any more to the workes of our hands, ye are our gods.* Whence comes all theſe? *for in thee, the Fatherleſſe findeth mercy.* Thou ſhalt be our *Rock*, our *Truſt*, our *Confidence* for ever: what will follow upon this? *Aſſur ſhall not ſave us any longer, we will not ride upon Horſes &c.* for we have pitched and placed our confidence better; on him, in whom, *the Fatherleſſe findeth mercy.*

Aſſur ſhall not ſave us.

The Confidence which this people had placed, partly in *Aſſur*, their friends and aſſociates; and partly in their owne ſtrength at home; now (promiſing Repentance) they renounce all ſuch confidence in *Aſſur*, *Horſes*, and *Idols*. *Aſſur ſhall not ſave us, &c.*

Firſt for this, *Aſſur ſhall not ſave us*; that is, the *Aſſyrians*; whom they had on the one ſide, and the *Ægyptians* on the other: it being (as we ſee in the Prophecies of *Iſay* and *Ieremy*) ordinary

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ordinary with Gods people, in any diſtreſſe to have recourſe to the *Aſſyrians*, or *Ægyptians*; as if God had not beene ſufficient to be their Rock and their ſhield. Wee ſee how often the Lord complaines of this manner of dealing, *Iſay* 30.2. & 31.1. *Woe unto them that goe downe into Ægypt for helpe, and ſtay on horſes, and truſt in chariots, becauſe they are many, &c.* The Prophets (and ſo this Prophet) are very full of ſuch complaints. It being one of the cheefe arguments here preſſeth, their falſeneſſe in this, that in any feare or perill, they ran to the ſhelter of other Nations, eſpecially theſe two, *Ægypt*, and *Aſſyria*, as you have it, Chap. 12.1. *Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the Eaſt winde, hee daily increaſeth lies and deſolation, and they doe make a Covenant with the Aſſyrians, and oyle is carried into Ægypt*, that is, Balme, who had this priviledge above all other nations, to abound in pretious Balmes: which balme and oyle they carried for a preſent into *Ægypt*, to win their favour againſt the *Aſſyrians*. Sometimes they relied on the one, and ſometimes on the other, the ſtory and cauſes whereof were too tedious to relate, wherefore I come to the uſefull points ariſing hence. *Aſſur ſhall not ſave us.*

1. *That man naturally is prone to put confidence in the creature.*

2. *That the creature is unſufficient and unable to yeeld us this prop to uphold our confidence.*

3. *That Gods people when they are endowed with light ſupernaturall, to diſcerne and be convinced hereof,*

Ser. III.

hereof, are of that minde to ſay [*Aſhur ſhall not ſave us.*]

But to make way to theſe things, wee muſt firſt obſerve two things for a preparative.

Doct. *That reformation muſt be ioyed with prayer and praiſe.*

Firſt, *That Reformation of life muſt be joyned with Prayer and Praiſe.* There was Prayer before, and a promiſe of Praiſe; but (as here) there muſt be joyn'd reformation of their ſinne. That it muſt be ſo it appeares. First for Prayer: it is ſaid, *Pſal.* 66.18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not heare my Prayer:* and for Praiſe; Pro. 15.8. *The* very *ſacrifice of the wicked* (who reformes not his waies) *is abhominable:* ſo that without Reformation, Prayer and Praiſe is to no purpoſe. Therefore it is brought here after a promiſe of Praiſe. Lord as we meane to praiſe thee, ſo wee intend a thorough reformation of former ſinnes whereof wee were guilty. We will renounce *Aſhur*, and confidence in *Horſes*, *Idols* and the like. Therefore let us when we come to God with *Prayer* and *Praiſe*, thinke alſo of reforming what is amiſſe. Ioſh. 7.19. Out with *Achan*; if there be any *dead flie* or *Achan* uncaſt out, Prayer and Praiſe is in vaine. Will you ſteale, lie, commit Adultery, ſweare falſely, and come and ſtand before me (ſaith the Lord by the Prophet *Ieremiah*)? Ier. 7.9. Will you offer to *Pray* to me and *Praiſe* me living in theſe and theſe ſinnes? No, God will abhorre both that Prayer and Praiſe, Pſal. 50 16. where there is no reformation. *What haſt thou to doe to take my Name in thy mouth, ſince thou ha-*

teſt

test to be reformed, and hast cast my words behind thee? saith God. Where he pleades with the Hypocrite for this audacious boldnesse in severing things conjoyned by God. Therefore as wee would not have our Prayers turned backe from Heaven, which should bring a blessing upon all other things else: As we would not have our sacrifices abhominable to God, labour to reforme what is amisse, amend all, or else never thinke our lip-labour will proove any thing but a lost labour, without this Reformation.

A *Second* thing which I observe in generall, before I come to the particulars, is,

Doct.

That true Repentance is of the particular sinne which we are most addicted to, and most guilty of.

The particular sinne of this people (whom God so instructs here) was their confidence in *Assyria*, *Horses* and *Idols*. Now therefore Repenting, they repent of the particular maine sinnes they were most guilty of, which being stricken downe, all the lesser will be easie to conquer. As when *Goliah* himselfe was stricken downe, all the host of the *Philistims* runne away. So when *Goliah* shall be slaine in us, the reigning ruling domineering sinne, the rest will easily be conquered.

1 Sam. 17. 51.

Therefore let us make an Use of *Examination* and triall of our Repentance. If it be sound, it drawes with it a reformation, as in generall, so especially of our particular sinnes, as those, 1 *Sam.* 12. 8. confesse and say, *Above all other things wee have sinned in this, in asking a King.*

Use.

Triall of Repentance.

We

We were naught and had offended God many waies before, but herein we have beene exceeding ſinnefull, in ſeeking another Governour, being weary of Gods gratious Governement over us. So a gratious heart will ſay, I have beene a wretch in all other things, but in this and that ſin above all other. Thus it was with the
Ioh. 4. 18. woman of *Samaria*, when ſhee was put in minde by Chriſt of her particular grand ſinne, that ſhee had beene a light woman and had had many husbands, he whom ſhe lived with now not being her husband. This diſcovery (when Chriſt touched the galled part) did ſo worke upon her conſcience, that it occaſioned a generall repentance of all her other ſinnes whatſoever. And indeed ſound repentance of one maine ſin, will draw with it all the reſt. And for the moſt part when God brings any man home to him, he ſo carries our repentance, that diſcovering unto us our ſinnefullneſſe, hee eſpecially ſhewes us our *Dalilah*, *Iſaack*, *Herodias*, our particular ſinne, which being caſt out, we prevaile eaſily againſt the reſt. As the charge was given by the King
2 Chron. 18. 30. of *Aram* againſt *Ahab*, *fight neither againſt great nor ſmall, but onely againſt the King of Iſrael*, kill him, and then there will be an end of the battell. So let us not ſtand ſtriking at this and that ſinne which wee are not ſo much tempted to, if we will indeed proove our repentance to be ſound, but at that maine ſinne which by nature, calling or cuſtome we are moſt prone unto. Repentance for this cauſes Repentance for all the

the reſt, as here the Church ſaith, *Aſſur ſhall not ſave us, we will not ride upon horſes*, &c.

It is a grand impoſture, which carries many to Hell, they will cheriſh themſelves in ſome groſſe maine ſinne, which pleaſes corrupt nature, and is advantagious to them: and by way of compenſation with God they will doe many other things well, but leave a dead flie to marre all. Whereas they ſhould begin here eſpecially. This much in generall, which things premiſed, I come to the forenamed particulars. Firſt,

That naturally we are apt and prone to confidence in outward helps and preſent things. Doct.

This came to our nature from the firſt fall; what was our fall at firſt? A turning from the All-ſufficient unchangeable God to the creature. If I ſhould deſcribe ſinne, it is nothing but a turning from God to one creature or other, when we find not contentment and ſufficiencie in one creature, we run to another, as the bird flies from one tree and bough to another, ſo we ſeeke varietie of contentments from one thing to another, ſuch is the pravitie of our nature ſince the fall. This is a fundamentall concluſion; man naturally will, and muſt have ſomewhat to relie on. The ſoule muſt have a bottome, a foundation to reſt on, either ſuch as the world affords or a better. Weake things muſt have their ſupports: as wee ſee, the Vine being a weake thing, is commonly ſupported by the Elme or the like ſupplie. So it is with the ſoule ſince the fall: becauſe it is weake, and cannot

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uphold nor ſatisfie it ſelfe with it ſelfe, therefore it lookes out of it ſelfe. Looke to God it cannot till it be in the ſtate of grace, for being his enemie, it loves not to look to him or his waies, or have dealing with him; therefore it lookes unto the creature, that next hand unto it ſelfe. This being naturally ſince the fall, that what we had in God before when we ſtood, we now labour to have in the creature.

Reaſon. 1. Loſſe of former communion with God

Becauſe (as was ſaid) having loſt Communion with God, ſomewhat we muſt have to ſtay the ſoule.

2. Abuſe of our fancie.

How our fancies come to be ſo abuſed, as to dote on the creature.

Secondly, becauſe Satan joynes with our ſenſe and fancie, by which wee are naturally prone to live, eſteeming of things, not by faith and by deeper grounds, but by fancie. Now fancie having communion with ſenſe, what it diſcovers and preſents for good and great; *fancie* makes it greater, and the Divell above all having communion with that facultie of *fancie*, and ſo a ſpirit of error being mixed therewith, to make our fancie thinke the riches of the world to be the onely riches: The greatneſſe and goodneſſe of the creature, to bee the onely greatneſſe and goodneſſe, and the ſtrength thereof, the onely ſtrength: This ſpirit of error joyning with our owne ſpirits, and with the deceit of our natures, makes us ſet a higher value on the creature, inlargeth and inrageth the fancie, making it ſpiritually drunk ſo as to conceive amiſſe of things.

Vſe.

Briefely for Uſe hereof, it being but a directing

cting point to others. Let us take notice of our corruption here in and be humbled for it, taking in good part thoſe afflictions and croſſes which God ſends us to convince and let us ſee that there is no ſuch thing in the creature as we imagined. Becauſe naturally, we are deſperately given to thinke that there is ſomewhat more therein then there is. Now affliction helpes this ſickneſſe of fancie, imbittering unto us all confidence in the creature. Therefore it is a happy and a bleſſed thing to be croſſed in that which we over-value, as theſe *Iſraelites* heere did, the *Aſſyrians* and the *Ægyptians*: for being enemies, they truſted in a *broken reed*, as we ſhall ſee further in the ſecond point,

How theſe outward things cannot helpe us.

Doct. *That the creature cannot helpe in our eſpeciall need.*

How prone ſo ever we are to rely upon them, they are in effect nothing, they cannot helpe us, and ſo are not to be relied upon. *Aſſhur ſhall not ſave us.* Indeed it will not, it cannot; theſe things cannot aid us at our moſt need. So that that which we moſt pitch upon, failes us when we ſhould eſpecially have helpe; ſome preſent vaniſhing ſupply they yeeld: but little to purpoſe. They have not that in them which ſhould ſupport the ſoule at a ſtrait, or great pinch as wee ſay.

Reaſon.

The Reaſon is largely given by *Salomon* in the whole booke of *Eccleſiaſtes*, *All is vanity and vexation of ſpirit.* There is a vanity in all the creatures, being emptie and not able to ſupport the ſoule. They are vaine in their continu-

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ance, and emptie in regard of their ſtrength, they are gone when wee have need of them.

Prov. 23. 5. *Riches* (as the Wiſeman ſaith) are gone, and have wings to flie away in our moſt need. So *Friends*, are fugitive good things, being like to

Job. 6. 15. the brookes mentioned in *Iob*: which when in Summer there is need of, then they are dried up, and yet run amaine in Winter when there is no need of them. So earthly ſupports, when there is no need of them, then they are at hand, but when we have moſt need of them are gone. *They*

Ier. 2. 13. *are broken Ciſternes*, as the Prophet calles them: *Ciſternes*, that is, they have a limited capacity, a Ciſterne is not a ſpring: ſo all their ſupport (at the beſt) is but a bounded and a mixed ſufficiency, and that alſo which will quickly faile. Like water in a Ciſterne, which if it be not fed with a continuall ſpring, failes or putrifies preſently. Likewiſe theſe outward things are not ſufficient for the grievance, for being limited and bounded, the grievance will be above the ſtrength of the creature; which though ſometime it be preſent and doe not faile, yet the trouble is ſuch, that it is above the ſtrength of the creature to helpe. So that for theſe and the like reſpects, there is no ſufficiency nor helpe to be expected from the creature. *Aſſur ſhall not ſave us*, hee is not a ſufficient ground of truſt. Why?

1. *He is but a Creature.*
2. *He is an Enemie.*
3. *He is an Idolater.*

So

So that, take him in all theſe three relations, he is not to be truſted.

1. *He is a Creature*, what is a Creature? nothing as it were, ſaith the Prophet, *all creatures before him are as nothing, and as a very little thing*; and what it is, when he pleaſeth he can diſſolve it into nothing, turne it into duſt. Mans breath is in his noſtrills, all fleſh is graſſe, and all his glory as the flower of graſſe. If a man truſt the creature, he may outlive his truſt, his prop may be taken from him and downe he falls. *Aſhur* muſt not be truſted therefore as a *Creature*; nor as a *Man*, for that brings us within the curſe: *Jer.* 17. 5. Thus ſaith the Lord, *Curſed be the man that truſteth in man, and maketh fleſh his arme*, &c. So truſting in the creature not only deceives us, but brings us within the curſe. In that reſpect, *Aſhur* muſt not be truſted.

But *Aſhur* likewiſe was an *Enemy*, and a ſecret enemie: for howſoever the ten Tribes unto whom *Heſea* prophecied were great Idolaters, yet they were ſomewhat better then *Aſhur*, who was without the pale of the Church, and a wholy corrupted Church: therefore they were enemies to the ten Tribes, and amongſt other reaſons, becauſe they were not ſo bad as they, nor deeply enough dyed with Idolatry.

Many thinke they may complie with Popery in ſome few things to gaine their love, and that there may be a joyning with them in this and that: but doe we thinke that they will ever truſt us for all this? No, they will alway hate

us still we be as bad as they, and then they will despise us, and secure themselves of us. Therefore there is no trusting of Papists, as Papists: not onely *Creatures*, but as false, and as enemies. For this is the nature of wicked men, they will never trust better then themselves, till they become as bad as they are, after which they despise them; say they, now we may trust such and such a one, he is as bad as we, becom'd one of us. Which is the reason why some of a naughty disposition take away the chastity and virginity of mens consciences, making them take this and that evill course: and then they thinke they have such safe, being as bad as themselves. Wherein they deale as *Achitophels* politique diveliſh counsell was, that *Absalon* should doe that which was naught, and then he should be sure that *David* and he should never agree after that: and that then by this discovery, the wicked Jewes set on mischiefe might secure themselves of *Absalon*. So they, now that they joyne with us, God will forsake them, we shall have them our instruments for any thing. First, they would have the ten Tribes as bad as they, and then gave them the slip whensoever they trusted them.

2 Sam. 16. 21.

Againe, neither were they to be trusted as *Idolaters*, to have league and society with them. There may be some commerce and traffique with them, but amity and trust none. *Assur* and *Egypt* were horrible Idolaters, and therefore not to be trusted in that respect. As wee see the

the Prophet in this case reprooved good *Iehoshaphat* when he had joyn'd with wicked *Ahab*, King of the ten Tribes: *shouldest thou helpe the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore wrath is upon thee from before the Lord.* So we see it is a dangerous thing to bee in league with Idolaters; even such as the ten Tribes were, who had some Religion amongst them: this good King was chidden for it. 2 Cron. 19:2.

We will not ride upon Horses.

What kinde of creature a Horse is, it is worth the seeing, what a description God gives of him, that we may see what reason the Spirit of God hath to instance in the *Horse*, saith God to *Iob. Hast thou given the Horse strength? Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? Canst thou make him afraid as a grashopper? The glory of his Nostrills is terrible: He paweth in the valley, and rejoyceth in his strength, hee goeth on to meete the armed men. He mocketh at feare, and is not affrighted: neither turneth he backe from the sword. The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering speare and the shield. He swalloweth the ground with fiercenesse and rage, neither believeth hee that it is the sound of the trumpet: Hee saith among the Trumpets, Ha, Ha, and hee smelleth the battell afarre off, the thunder of the Captaines and the shouting.* A notable and excellent description of this warlike creature: and yet for all this excellencie so described by the Spirit of God, in another place, the Psalmist saith, *A Horse is a vaine thing for safety, neither shall hee deliver any by his great* Iob. 39:19,20, 21,&c. Psal. 33.17. Psal. 20.7.

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strength; Some trust in Chariots and some in Horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. Prov. 21. 31. So in another place, *The Horse is prepared against the day of battell, but victory is of the Lord.*

How oft have you in the *Psalmes*, that proud warlike creature disparaged, because naturally men are more bewitched with that, then with any other creature. If they have store of Horses, then they thinke they are strong. Therefore, *God forbids the King to multiplie Horses to himselfe: nor cause the people to returne to Ægypt, to the end hee should multiplie Horses,* &c. Deut. 17. 16. Because God is the strength of his Church, when there is no multitude of Horses: You see it is a bewitching creature, and yet a vaine helpe. A place like this we have, *Isa.* 2. 7. complaining there of the naughty people which were among the Jewes, at that time as bad as the Israelites. Saith he, *Their land also is full of silver and gold; neither is there any end of their treasures, their land is also full of Horses, neither is there any end of their Chariots.* Isa. 2. 7. What is there a fault in this? No. *Luther* saith, good workes are good, but the confidence in them is damnable. So gold and silver, Horses and Chariots are good creatures of God, But this was their sin, confidence in these things: *there is no end of their treasures*; if they had treasure enough, they should doe well enough. *Their land also was full of Horses.* Was this a sinne? No, but their confidence in them: they thought they were a wise people to have such furniture

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furniture and prouision of munition for warre: but God was their King, and the chiefe gouernour of his people, and for them to heape up these things, to trust over much in them, it was a matter of complaint, *Their land also is full of Idols.*

That there is no confidence to be put, either in Home, or forraigne forces.

Thus you see there is no confidence to be put neither in the one nor the other: neither in the association of forraine friends, who will proove deceitfull; *reeds of Ægypt*, that not onely deceive, but the splinters thereof flie about, and may run up into the hand, such are Idolaters and false friends, deceitfull and hurtfull. Nor in *Home*, there is no trust in *Horses*, munition or such like. What doth this implie, that to warre and have prouision in that kinde is unlawfull, and unnecessary, because hee findes fault here with *Horses* and the like? No, take heed of that, for *Iohn Baptist* if the souldiers profession had beene unlawfull, he would have bid them cast away their weapons, but hee bids them, *Doe violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, &c.* Luk. 3. 14. And God would never style himselfe, *The Lord of Hosts, and a man of warre, and he that teacheth our hands to warre, and our fingers to fight*, Isa. 42. 13. Psal. 18 34. unlesse it were good in the season: therefore warre is lawfull, seeing in the way to Heaven wee live in the midst of enemies.

That warre is lawfull.

Therefore it is but an Anabaptisticall fancie, to judge warre to be unlawfull: No, no, it is cleane another thing which the Holy Ghost aimes at: to beate backe carnall confidence. For it is an equall fault, to multiplie helpes, and

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and to neglect them: either of both are fatall many times, to multiplie Horſes truſting in them, or to ſpoile Horſes and other helpes vainely, ſo to weaken a Kingdome. Therefore there is a middle way for all outward things, a fit care to ſerve Gods providence, and when we have done, truſt in God without tempting of him, For to neglect theſe helpes is to tempt him; and to truſt in them (when we have them) is to commit Idolatry with them. Beware of both theſe extreames, for God will have his providence ſerved in the uſe of lawfull meanes: when there is this great care in a Chriſtian Common wealth; there is a promiſe of good ſucceſſe: becauſe God is with us: otherwiſe what is all, if he be our enemie? So we ſee the ſecond point made good, *That theſe outward things of themſelves cannot helpe.* Therefore comes this in the third place,

Obſerv. *That when God alters and changes and moldeth a new the heart of a man to Repentance, he altereth his confidence in the creature.*

A Chriſtian ſtate will not truſt in *Aſhur*, nor in *Horſes*, it is true both of ſtate and perſons. The Reaſon will follow after in the end of the verſe:

Reaſon. *For in thee the fatherleſſe findeth mercy.* Becauſe, when a man hath once repented, there is a cloſing betweene God and him, and he ſeeth an All-ſufficiency in God to ſatisfie all his deſires. Therefore he will uſe all other things as helpes, and as farre as it may ſtand with his

Heb: 11: 27. favour. For, he hath *Moſes* eye put in him, a

new

new eye to ſee him that is inviſible, to ſee God in his greatneſſe, and other things in their right eſtimate as vaine things. What is Repentance, but a change of the minde, when a man comes to be wiſe and judicious, as indeed repentant men are the onely wiſe men. Then a man hath an eſteeme of God to bee *El-ſhady*, All-ſufficient, and all other things to be as they are uncertaine; that is, they are ſo to day, as that they may be otherwiſe to morrow: for that is the nature of the creatures, they are in *Potentia*, in a poſſibility to bee other things then they are. God is alway, *I am*, alway the ſame, there is not ſo much as a ſhadow of changing in him. Wherefore when the ſoule hath attained unto this ſpirituall eye-ſight and wiſedome; if it be a ſinnefull aſſociatiation with *Aigypt* or *Aſhur*, with this Idolater or that, he will not meddle; and as for other helpes, hee will not uſe them further then as ſubordinate meanes. When a man is converted, hee hath not a double, not a divided heart; to truſt partly to God, and partly to the creature: If God faile him he hath *Aſhur* and Horſes enough, and aſſociation with all round about, but a Chriſtian he will uſe all helpes as they may ſtand with the favour of God, and are ſubordinate under him. Now for Triall. SER. III.

How ſhall we know whether we exceed in this confidence in the creature or not. *Queſt.*

We may know it by adventuring on ill courſes and cauſes, thinking to beare them out with *Aſhur* and with *Horſes*: but all the mercinary ſouldiers *Sol.* 1.

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souldiers in the world, and all the Horses at home and abroad, what can they doe when God is angry? Now, when there is such confidence in these things, as for to ourdare God, then there is too much trust in them; that trust will end in confusion, if it be not repented of; for that lifts up the heart in the creature, and as the Heathen man observes, God delights to make great little, and little great It is his daily worke to cast downe mountaines, and exalt the valleyes. Those that are great, and boast in their greatnesse, as if they would command Heaven and Earth, God delights to make their greatnesse little, and at length nothing, and to raise up the day of small things. Therefore the Apostle

1 Cor. 12. 9. saith, *If I rejoyce, it shall be in my infirmities*, in nothing else; for God delights to shew strength in weakenesse.

2. By security and resting of the soule in meaner things; never seeking to divine and religious helpes, when we are supplied with those that are outward. For these people when they trusted to *Assyria* and *Ægypt*, those false supports and sandie foundations, they were careless of God, and therefore must trust in somewhat else. Wherefore if we see a man secure and careless, certainely he trusts too much to uncertaine riches, to *Ashur*, to *Ægypt*, to friends, or to outward helpes, his security bewraies that. If a man trust God in the use of the meanes, his care will be to keepe God his friend by Repentance and daily exercises of Religion, by making

king conſcience of his duty. But if he truſt the meanes and not God, he will be careleſſe and weake in good duties, dull and ſlow, and (out of the Atheiſme of his heart) cry Tuſh, if God do not helpe mee, I ſhall have helpe from friends abroad, and be ſupported with this and that at home; Horſes and the like, all ſhall be well. SERM. III.

Let us therefore enter into our owne ſoules, and examine our ſelves, how farre forth we are guilty of this ſinne, and thinke we come ſo farre ſhort of Repentance: for the ten Tribes here, the people of God when they repented, ſay, *Aſſur ſhall not ſave us, wee will not ride upon Horſes*; he ſpeakes comparatively, as truſted in. Therefore let us take heed of that boaſting vaine-glorious diſpoſition ariſing from the ſupply of the creature: Saith God, *Let not the wiſe man glory in his wiſdome, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he underſtandeth and knoweth this, that I am the Lord, which exerciſe loving kindneſſe, judgement and righteouſneſſe in the earth*, &c. Let a man glorie that hee knowes God in Chriſt to be his God in the Covenant of grace: that hee hath the God of all ſtrength, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords to be his: who hath all other things at his command; who is independant, and all-ſufficient. If a man will boaſt, let him goe out of himſelfe to God, and plant himſelfe there, and for other things, take heed the heart be not lift up with them. *Vſe.* 1. Ier 9.23.

Conſider

Boasting

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1. *That boaſting is Idolatry.*

2. *Adultery,* Iam. 4. 4.

3. *Drunkenneſſe.* Habak. 2. 4, 5

4. *Boaſting cauſeth blindneſſe.*

Conſider, what kinde of thing boaſting is, it is Idolatry, for it ſets the creature in the place and roome of God. And it is alſo ſpirituall Adulterie, whereby we fixe our affections upon the creature which ſhould be placed on God, as it is in *Iames*. *Ye adulterers and adultereſſes, know ye not that the friendſhip of the world is enmity with God?* &c. *Habakuk* calls it Drunkenneſſe, for it makes the ſoule drunk with ſottiſhneſſe and conceitedneſſe; ſo as a man (in this caſe) is never ſober, untill God ſtrip him of all. And then againe, it puts forth the eye of the ſoule, it is a kinde of white that marres the ſight: when a man lookes to *Aſhur*, *Horſes*, and to outward ſtrength, where is God all this while? theſe are as ſo many clouds that they cannot ſee God, but altogether pore upon the creature: hee ſees ſo much greatneſſe there, that God ſeemes nothing. But when a man ſees God in his greatneſſe and almightineſſe, then the creature is nothing: but untill this be, there is a miſt and blindneſſe in the eye of the ſoule.

Iob. 42. 6.

And when we have ſeene our guiltineſſe this way (as who of us in this caſe may not be confounded and aſhamed of relying too much on outward helpes?) then let us labour to take off our ſoules from theſe outward things, whether it be ſtrength abroad or at home. Which that we may doe, wee muſt labour for that Obedience which our Saviour Chriſt exhorts us unto in *ſelfe-deniall*, not to truſt to our owne deviſes, policie or ſtrength; wit, will, or conceipts that this

Mat. 16. 24.

this or that may helpe us, nor any thing: make it generall. For when converſion is wrought, and the heart is turned to God, it turnes from the creature, onely uſing it as ſubordinate to God. We ſee uſually, men that exalt themſelves in confidence either of ſtrength, of wit, or whatſoever, they are ſucceſſeleſſe in their iſſue: for God delights to confound them, and goe beyond their wit: as we have it, *Iſa.* 30. They thought to goe beyond God with their policie, they would have helpe out of *Ægypt*, this and that way. O ſaith the Prophet: but for all this, God is wiſe to ſee through all your devices: ſecretly hereby touching them to the quick, as ſottiſh perſons who thought by their ſhallow braines to goe beyond God; you thinke Religious courſes, and the obedience God preſcribeth to you, to be idle needleſſe courſes, but notwithſtanding God is wiſe, he will goe beyond you, and catch you in your owne craft. *Therefore, the ſtrength of Pharaoh ſhall be your ſhame, and the truſt in the ſhadow of Ægypt your confuſion.* Iſa. 30. 3.

Thus God loves to ſcatter *Babels* Fabriques and Holds that are erected in confidence of humane ſtrength againſt him; he delights to catch the wiſe in their owne craft; to beat all downe, lay all high imaginations and things flat before him; that no fleſh may glory in his ſight. There is to this purpoſe a notable place in *Iſay*. *Behold all yee that kindle a fire, that compaſſe your ſelves about with ſparkes*: (for they kindled a fire and had a light of their owne, and would not borrow Gen. 11. 8. Iſa. 50. 11.

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borrow light from God:) *walke in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled,* but what is the conclusion of all? *This shall ye have of mine hand,* I dare assure you of this, saith the Prophet: *You shall lie downe in sorrow:* those that walke by the light and sparke of their owne fire; this they shall have at Gods hands; they shall lie downe in sorrow.

Danger of carnall confidence.

Let us therefore take heed of carnall confidence. You have a number who love to sleepe in a whole skinne, and will be sure to take the safest courses (as they thinke) not consulting with God, but with flesh and blood. It might be instanced in stories of former times, how God hath crossed Emperours and great men in this kind, were it not too tedious. But for present instance, you have many who will be of no setled Religion, O they cannot tell, there may be a change, therefore they will be sure to offend neither part: this is their policie, and if they be in place, they will reforme nothing; O I shall lay my selfe open to advantages, and stirre up enemies against me: and so they will not trust God, but have carnall devices to turne off all duty whatsoever. It is an ordinary speech, but very true: *Policie overthrowes Policie.* It is true of carnall Policie, when a man goes by carnall rules to be governed by Gods enemy, and his owne; with his owne wit and understanding, which leads him to outward things: this kind of Policie overthrowes all policie and outward governement at length. Those that walke religiously

ligiously and by rule, they walke most confidently and securely as the issue will shew; Therefore, consider that (set God aside) all is but vanity, And that

In what respects the creature is so empty.

Fifft, in regard they do not yeeld that which we expect they should yeeld: there is a falshood in the things, they promise this and that in shewes, but when we possesse them, they yeeld it not; as they have no strength in deed, so they deceive. Then also, *There is a mutability in them*; for there is nothing in the world but changes, there is a vanity of corruption in them; all things at last come to an end, save God, who is unchangeable. Then againe besides the intrinsecall vanity in all outward things, and whatsoever carnall reason leads unto, *They are snares and baites unto us, to draw us away from God*, by reason of the vanity of our nature, vainer then the things themselves: therefore take heed of confidence in any thing, or else this will be the issue, wee shall be worse then the things we trust, *Vanity of vanities, all things are vanity*, and man himselfe is lighter then vanity saith the Psalmist, hee that trusts to vanity is worse then vanity, a man cannot *stare non stante*, stand on a thing that cannot stand it selfe; a man cannot stand on a thing that is mutable and changeable, if hee doth, he is vaine with the thing. Even as a picture drawne upon ice, as the ice dissolves, so the picture vanisheth away. So it is with all confidence in the creature whatsoever, it is like a picture upon ice, which vanisheth

1. *They deceive our expectation*

2. *They are mutable.*

3. *They are snares and baites unto us.*

Eccles. 1. 1. Psal. 62. 9.

Ser. III.

with the things themselves. He that stands upon a slippery thing, slips with the thing he stands on. If there were no word of God against it, yet this much may be sufficient out of the Principles of Reason, to shew the folly of trusting to *Ashur* and *Horses* and the like.

Let this be the end of all then touching this carnall confidence, to beware that we doe not fasten our affections too much upon any earthly thing, at home or abroad; within or without our selves: for, *God will destroy the wisedome of the wise*; 1 Cor. 1. 19. let us take heed therefore of all false confidence whatsoever. Let us use all outward helpes, yet so as to relie upon God for his blessing in the use of all. And when they all faile; be of *Iehoshaphats* 2 Chro. 20. 12. minde, *Lord, we know not what to doe*, the creature failes us, our helpes faile us, *but our eyes are upon thee*. So when all outward *Ashurs* and *Horses* and helpes faile, despaire not; for the lesse helpe there is in the creature, the more there is in God. As Iudg. 7. 2. *Gideon* with his Army, when he thought to carrie it away with multitude: God told him there were too many of them to get the victory by, least Israel should vaunt themselves of their number: and so lessened the armie to three hundred. So it is not the meanes, but the blessing on the meanes which helpes us. If we be never so low, dispaire not, let us make God ours, who is All-sufficient and Almighty, and then if we were brought a hundred times lower then we are, God will helpe and raise us. Those who labour not to have God the Lord of Hosts to goe out with their

their Armies, if they had all the *Aſſours* and *Horſes* in the world, all were in vaine. It was therfore a good reſolution of *Moſes*, ſaith he to God, *If thy preſence go not with us, carrie us not hence*, he would not goe one ſtep forward without God: ſo if we cannot make God our friend to goe out before us, in vaine it is to goe one ſtep forward. Let us therefore double our care in holy duties, renewing our Covenant with God, before the decree come out againſt us: the more religious, the more ſecure we ſhall be. If wee had all the creatures in the world to help us, what are they but vanity and nothing, if God be our enemy. Theſe things we know well enough for notion, but let us labour to bring them home for uſe in theſe dangerous times abroad. Let us begin where we ſhould, that our worke may be eſpecially in Heaven. Let us reforme our lives, being moderately carefull, as Chriſtians ſhould without tempting Gods providence, uſing rightly all civill ſupports and helpes, ſeaſonably and to the beſt advantage: for (as was ſaid) the careleſneſſe herein for defence, may proove as dangerous and fatall to a State, as the too much confidence and truſt in them.

Exod. 33. 15.

The end of the third Sermon.

THE FOVRTH SERMON.

Hos. 14. 3.

Asshur shall not save us, we will not ride upon Horses, neither will we say any more to the works of our hands, ye are our gods, for in thee the Fatherlesse findeth mercy.

WE shewed you heretofore at large, how the Spirit of God by the Prophet, doth here dictate a forme of turning unto these *Israelites*, *Take unto you wordes*, and then teacheth them what they should returne backe againe: Thanks, *So will wee render the Calves of our lips*, wherein they shew two things. 1. That they have no great

matters

matters to render, *Oxen or Sheepe*, &c. 2. They shew what is most pleasing unto God, *The Calves of our lips*; that is, thankesgiving from a broken heart, which (as the *Psalmist* speakes) pleaseth God better then *a bullocke that hath hornes and hoofes*. But this is not enough, the Holy Ghost therefore doth prescribe them together with Prayer and Thankesgiving, Reformation, *Asshur shall not save us, wee will not ride upon Horses, neither will we say any more to the workes of our hands, ye are our gods, for in thee the fatherlesse findeth mercy*. So that here you have *Reformation* joyned with *Prayer* and *Praise*. Whence we observed divers things, That without Reformation our Prayers are abhominable: That in Repentance there must be Reformation of our speciall sinne, which here they doe. Take this one thing more in the third place, which shall be added to the former.

Sar. IIII.

In Reformation, we must goe not onely to the outward delinquencies, but to the spring of them, which is some breach of the first Table.

Observ.

The root of all sinne is the deficiency of obedience to some command of the first Table, when confidence is not pitched aright in God, or when it is misapplyed, and misfastened to the creature: when the soule sets up somewhat for a stay and prop unto it, which it should not doe, this is a spirituall and a subtle sinne, and must be repented of, as here, *Asshur shall not save us*, &c. It were good therefore for all those who seriously intend the worke of Repentance,

The Roote of all sin whence.

Serm. III.

to take this courſe. If the groſſe fault be of the *ſecond Table*; take occaſion of ſorrow and mourning thence; but when you have begunne there, reſolve and bring all to the breeding ſinne of all, which is, the faſtning of the ſoule falſly: when it is not well faſtened and bottomed in the root. And therefore it was well done by *Luther*, who in a Catechiſme of his brings in the Firſt Commandement into all the Commandements of the firſt and ſecond Table. *Thou ſhalt have no other Gods but me*, Therefore thou ſhalt ſanctifie the *Sabbath*; Honour thy *Father* and *Mother*, ſhalt not take *my name in vaine*: ſhalt not *Commit Adultery*, ſhalt not *ſteale*, &c. Becauſe hee that hath no god but that God in his heart, will be ſure to ſanctifie the *Sabbath*, Honour his *Father* and *Mother*, not *Commit Adultery*, nor *ſteale*. And whence come all the breaches of the Second Table? Hence, that there is not the true feare and love of God in our hearts, and it is juſt with God for their ſpirituall ſinnes, to give them up to carnall and groſſe ſinnes. Therefore, though the Iſraelites here, had many groſſe ſinnes to repent of, yet they goe to the ſpring head, the breeding ſinne of all, *falſe Confidence*; this is to deale throughly, to goe to the core. *Aſſur ſhall not ſave us, we will not ride upon Horſes.* From whence in the third place, they deſcend to the next branch of their ſinne, *Idolatry*.

Neither will we ſay any more to the workes of our hands, ye are our gods.

All

Serm. IIII.

All false confidence hath two objects, for it is alwaies either,

1. *Out of Religion*, or
2. *In Religion.*

For the first, all *ill confidence and trust* if it be *out of Religion*, it is in the *Creature*, either

1. *Out of us*, or
2. *In our selves.*

Secondly, if it be *in Religion*, it is in a false god, as here, *Neither will we say any more to the works of our hands, ye are our gods.* Observe hence in the first place,

Man naturally is prone to Idolatry.

Observ. *That men are naturally prone to Idolatry.*

The story of the Bible and of all Ages sheweth how prone men are to Idolatry and will-worship, and what miseries ensued thereupon. Amongst other instances, we see how presently after that breach in the Kingdome of *David* and *Salomon*, by *Jeroboams* setting up of two *Calves*, how suddenly they fell to Idolatry, so that after that there was not one good King amongst them all, untill the nation was destroyed. And so in the story of their Antiquities, see how prone they were to Idolatry in the wilderness; *Moses* doth but goe up to the Mount, and they fall to Idolatrie; cause *Aaron* to make a Calfe, and dance round about it. The thing is so palpable, that it need not be stood upon, That mans nature is prone to Idolatry, which will not raise up it selfe to God, but fetch God to it selfe, and conceive of him according to its false imaginations.

Serm. IIII.

Now Idolatry is two waies committed in the false hollow and deceitfull heart of man: either,

1. *By attributing to the creature that which is proper to God onely; investing it with Gods Properties*, or

2. *By worshipping the true God in a false manner.*

What Idolatry is.

So that in the first place, Idolatry is to invest the creature with Gods properties. Goe to the highest creature, Christs Humane nature; we have some bitter spirits (*Lutherans* they call them) Protestants; who attribute to the humane nature of Christ, that which onely is proper to God, to be every where, and therefore to be in the Sacrament. You have some come neere them, both in their opinion and in their bitternesse, They will have a *nescio quomodo*, Christ is there though they know not how; but this is to make Christs humane nature a god, to make an Idoll of it. So prayers to Saints and Angels, this makes Idols of them, because it invests them with properties to know our hearts, which he must know unto whom we pray. And then, it gives unto them that which is proper to God, Worship and Prayer. But, we must call upon none, but whom we must beleeve in, and we must beleeve in none but God. Therefore, worshipping of Saints or Angels is Idolatry.

Secondly, Idolatry is to worship the true God in a false manner, to fixe his presence to that we should not fixe it to, to annexe it to Statues, Images,

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Images, Crucifixes, the picture of the Virgin *Mary* and the like. Not to run into the common place of Idolatry, but to come home unto our selves. Whether are the Papists Idolaters or not, like unto these Israelites, who say (being converted) *neither will we say unto the workes of our hands, ye are our gods?* *Quest.*

I answer, yes, as grosse as ever the *Heathens* were, and worse. The very *Ægyptians*, they worshipped none for gods, but those who were alive, as a *Papist* himselfe saith, (though he were an honest Papist) The *Ægyptians* worshipped living creatures, but we are worse then they, for we worship stocks and stones, and a peece of bread in the Sacrament. And to this purpose, one of their Jesuites confesseth this, and yeeldeth the question for granted; That if there be not a Transubstantiation of the bread turned into the body and blood of Christ, we are worse Idolaters then these and these nations: because we worship a peece of bread, which is a dead thing. But we assume (according to the Scriptures, The Judgement of our Church, of Antiquity, and of the Truth it selfe) the bread is not Transubstantiated, at least it is a doubtfull matter; for if it be not the intention of the Priest it is not; see here, upon what hazard they put the soules of people. *Answ.*

But they have many shifts for themselves, as among the rest this is one, that they doe not worship the image, but God or Christ before the Image. *Object.*

To

Ser. IIII.

Answ. *Popish shifts for worshipping of Images answered.*

To which the answer is, That the Fathers who wrote against the Heathens meet with this pretence, The Pagans had this excuse, we worship not this statue of *Iupiter*, but *Iupiter* himselfe. Thus they have no Allegation for themselves, but the Heathen had the same which the Ancient Fathers confuted. They are guilty of Idolatry in both the forenamed kindes: For first, They worship things that they should not, as appeares by their invocation of Saints, vows to them, their Temples, Altars and the like, full of their Images, giving them honour due unto God. And then, they worship the true God in a false manner before their Images, there is no kinde of Idolatry, but they are grossely guilty of it. Whereof let this be the Use.

Vse. I.

First of all, of *Thankefullnesse*, that God hath brought us into *Goshen*, into a Kingdome of light, that we are borne in a time and place of knowledg of the true God, wherein is the true worship of the true God. It is a matter that we cannot be too thankfull to God for. How shall we shew our selves thankfull? In keeping fast the true worship of God we have, and keeping out Idolatry; in reviving lawes in that kind, if not making new. What if there were liberty given for men to goe about the countrie to poyson people, would we endure such persons, and not lay hold upon them; so in that wee are freed from Jesuites who goe about to poyson the soules of Gods people, let us shew our thankefullnesse for this, and shun Idolatry of all sorts whatsoever.

Quest. *Answ.*

Secondly,

Secondly, see from hence, that there can be no tolleration of that Religion, no more (as was said) then to suffer and tollerate poysoners; as they said of *Colloquintida* in their portage: so, *there is death in the pot of Romish Religion.* Therefore it were good to compell them to come in and serve the Lord their God: as it is said, good *Iosiah* compelled those in his time to serve the Lord; so it were good such courses were taken to reforme and reclaime them. As Saint *Augustine* said of himselfe in his time, being a *Donatist*; he altered his judgement by force; in which case, it would be with them as with children, who when they are young, must be forced to schoole; but afterwards, they thanke them who forced them. So it is in Religion, though it cannot be forced, yet such might afterwards blesse God for them who brought them to the meanes, who instead of their blindnesse trained them up in more knowledge, by forcing them to use the meanes; for which (when God should open their eyes) they might blesse God another day. But this point of grosse Idolatry (so largely handled in Bookes) is onely touched by the way, that we may hate Idolatry the more: which could not be left out, the words leading to say somewhat of it, seeing how these Convents heere hate it, and out of that hatred make this profession: *neither will we say any more to the workes of our hands, ye are our gods*, &c.

2 Kings. 4. 40.

2 Chro. 34 33.

But this is not all, wee must know that there be other Idols then the Idols which we make with

with our hands: beſides theſe Religious Idols, there be Secular Idols in the world, ſuch as men ſet up to themſelves in their owne hearts. Whatſoever takes up the heart moſt, which they attribute more to then to God, that is their Idoll, their god. A mans *love*, a mans *feare* is his god. If a man feare greatneſſe rather then God, that he had rather diſpleaſe God then any great perſon, they are his Idols for the time. *The feare*
Prov. 29. 25. *of man brings a ſnare*, ſaith the Wiſeman, and thoſe who to get the favour of any in place, ſacrifice therefore their Credit, Profeſſion, Religion and ſoules; it is groſſe Idolatry, dangerous to the party, and dangerous to themſelves. It
Act. 12. 22. was the ruine of *Herod* to have that applauſe given him, and taken by him, *The voice of God and not of man*. So for any to be blowen up with flatterers that lift them up above their due meaſure, it is an exceeding wrong to them, prejudiceth their comfort, and will proove ill in the concluſion, indeed treaſon againſt their ſoules.

So there is a baſer ſort of Idolaters, who ſacrifice their credit and ſtate, whatſoever is good within them, their whole powers, to their baſe and filthy pleaſures. Thus man is degenerate ſince his fall, that he makes that his god, which is meaner then himſelfe. Man that was ordained for everlaſting happineſſe and Communion with God, is now brought to place his happineſſe and contentment in baſe pleaſures. Whereas it is with the ſoule of man for *good* or *ill*, as it applies it ſelfe to that which is greater or mean-

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ner then it ſelfe. If it apply it ſelfe to confidence and affiance in God, then it is better, for it is the happineſſe of the ſoule to have Communion with the ſpring of goodneſſe, as *Dauid* ſpeakes, *It is good for me to draw neere to God*, &c. when we ſuffer the ſoule to cleave in affiance to earthly things, it growes in ſome meaſure to the nature of the things adhered too: when we love the world and earthly things, we are earthly. Till the Spirit of God touch the ſoule (as the loadſtone doth the heavy iron drawing it up as it were) it will cleave to the creature, to baſer things then it ſelfe, and ſo makes the creature an Idoll, which is the common Idolatry of theſe times. Some make *Favour*, as the ambitious perſon: ſome their *Pleaſures*, as baſer perſons of meaner condition: and ſome *Riches*, every man as their temper and as their temptations are. Pſal. 73. 28.

Now it is not enough to be ſound in Religion one way in the maine, but we muſt bee ſound every way, without any touch of Idolatry. In a ſpeciall manner, the Apoſtle calls the *Covetous man* an *Idolater*, becauſe he makes his riches his Caſtle, thinking to carrie any thing with his wealth, but his riches oftentimes proove his ruine; for whatſoever a man loves more then God, God will make it his baine and ruine: at leaſt be ſure to take it away, if God meane to ſave the party: Therefore, here they ſay; *Aſſhur ſhall not ſave us, we will not ride upon Horſes, neither will we ſay any more to the works of our hands, ye are our gods.* Epheſ. 5. 5.

For

Serr. IIII.

For in thee the Fatherleſſe findeth mercy.

Here he ſhewes the Reaſon of their rejecting of all falſe confidence in *Aſhur*, in *Horſes*, in *Idols*: becauſe they had planted their confidence in the true God. They ſaid ſo when they had ſmarted by *Aſhur*, and by *Idolatry*: then *Aſhur ſhall not ſave us*, &c. They knew it by rule before, but till God plagued them, as he did oft by *Aſhur* and by *Ægypt*, when he broke the reed that it did not onely not uphold them, but run into their hands, they made no ſuch acknowledgment, hence obſerve,

Obſerv.

That ſinnes bitterneſſe cauſeth Repentance.

Uſually it is thus with man, he never repents till ſinne be imbittered to him.

He never alters his confidence, till his truſts be taken away; when God overthrowes the mold of his deviſes, or brings them upon his owne head, ſetting him to reape the fruit of his owne wayes; imbittering ſinnefull courſes to him, then hee returnes. Inſtruction without correction, doth for the moſt part little good. When *Aſhur* had dealt falſely with them, and Idolatry would doe them no good, then they begin to alter their judgement. What makes men after too much confidence in their wit, when they have by their plots and deviſes gone beyond what they ſhould doe, and wrapped and intangled themſelves in a net of their owne weaving (as we ſay) alter their judgement? They are then become ſick of their owne devices, this makes the change. For till then, the braine hath a kinde of net to wrap our devices in. So many

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many have nets in their braines, wherewith they intangle themſelves and others with their idle devices: which when they have done, and ſo woven the webb of their owne miſery; then they begin to ſay, as the Heathen ſaith when he was deceived. O foole am I, I was never a wiſe man. Then they begin to ſay, I was a foole to truſt ſuch and ſuch. I have tried ſuch and ſuch policies, and they have deceived me, I will now alter my courſe. And ſurely, men of great parts are ſeldome converted, till God confound their plots, and laies flat all their falſe confidence. When *Aſhur* diſappoints them, then *Aſhur ſhall not ſave us*, &c.

Therefore make this Uſe of it, not to bee diſcouraged when God doth confound any carnall plot or policie of ours, as to thinke that God hates either a Nation or a Perſon, when they have ill ſucceſſe in plots and projects which are not good. Nay, it is a ſigne rather that God intends good; if they make a right uſe of it. God intends converſion, to tranſlate falſe confidence from the creature to himſelfe, and to learne us to make God wiſe for us. It is a happy thing when in this world God will diſappoint a mans courſes and counſells, and bring him to ſhame, rather then he ſhould goe on and thrive in an evill and carnall courſe, and ſo to end his daies. There is no evidence at all which can be given of a Reprobate, becauſe there may be finall Repentance, Repentance at the laſt. But this is one, and as fearefull a ſigne as may be,

Vſe.

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be, to thrive and goe on in an evill courſe to the end. When God ſhall diſappoint and bring a man to ſhame in that he prided in, and built upon, It is a good ſigne; if thereupon we take advantage to turne to God, and lay a better bottome and foundation, as we ſee here, *Aſhur ſhall not ſave us, we will not ride upon Horſes*, &c. *For in thee the Fatherleſſe findeth mercy.*

As if he ſhould ſay, wee have that ſupply of ſtrength and comfort from thee, that *Aſhur*, *Horſes* and *Idols* cannot give: Therefore wee will alter our confidence, to fixe and pitch it upon thee, and truſt thee, becauſe, *In thee the Fatherleſſe findeth mercy*. We ſhall not need to ſay, *in thee will we truſt*; for, if God be apprehended thus, as one in whom *the Fatherleſſe findeth mercy*, affiance will follow. For, the object is the attractive and load-ſtone of the ſoule, ſo that if a fit obiect be preſented unto it, Affiance, Confidence and Truſt will of it ſelfe follow. Therefore the Spirit of God forbeares multiplication of words, and ſets downe this: *For in thee the Fatherleſſe findeth mercy*: and doth not ſay, *in thee will we truſt*, for that is implied; whoſoever conceives that God is ſo gratious and mercifull to deſpicable miſerable perſons: ſuch as are ſet downe in this one particular, *Fatherleſſe*: they cannot but truſt in God, therefore, the one is put for the other: *For in thee the Fatherleſſe findeth mercy*. Whence, from the dependance of the words obſerve,

Obſerv. *That it is not ſufficient to diſclaime affiance in the*

the creature, but we muſt pitch that affiance aright upon God.

We muſt not onely take it off where it ſhould not be placed, but ſet it where it ſhould be. *Ceaſe from evill, and learne to doe well.* Truſt not in the creature. *Ceaſe from man* (as the Prophet ſaith) *whoſe breath is in his Noſtrills; Commit thy waies to God, truſt in him.* The Heathen by the light of nature knew this, that for the *Negative*, there is no truſting in the creature, which is a vaine thing, they could ſpeake wonderfull wittily and to purpoſe of theſe things, eſpecially the *Stoicks.* They could ſee the vanity of the creature: but for the *Poſitive* part, where to place their confidence, that they were ignorant in. And ſo, for the other part here; *Neither will wee ſay any more to the workes of our hands yee are our gods.* Idolaters can ſee the vanity of falſe gods well enough. In *Italy* you have thouſands of the wittier and learneder ſort who ſee the folly and madneſſe of their Religion. And among our ſelves, how many witty men can diſclaime againſt Popery, who yet in their lives and converſations are not the better for it: becauſe they thinke it enough to ſee the error that miſleades them, though they never pitch their confidence as they ſhould doe. It is not enough therefore to reſt in the *Negative* part. A Negative Chriſtian is no Chriſtian, not to be an Idolater, not to be a Papiſt, no there muſt be ſomewhat elſe, wee muſt bring forth good fruit, or elſe wee are for the fire, and are neere to curſing and burning.

Iſa. 1. 16, 17. Iſa, 2. 22.

Pſal. 37. 5.

It is much eaſier to ſee the vanity of the creature, then to know where to pitch our confidence.

Mat. 3. 10.

Heb. 6. 8.

Sect. IIII.

This is ſpoken the rather, becauſe many thinke themſelves well, when they can diſclaime againſt the errors of Popery, and that they are good Chriſtians, becauſe they can argue well. O, ſuch make Religion nothing but a matter of opinion, of canvaſing an argument, &c. But, it is another manner of matter: *A divine Power exerciſed upon the ſoule, whereby it is transformed into the obedience of divine truth, and molded into it.* So that there muſt be a *Poſitive*, as well as a *Negative* Religion, a cleaving to God, as well as a forſaking of Idols.

Religion what?

Againe, in the ſevering of theſe Idols from God, we muſt know and obſerve hence,

Obſerv. *That there is no Communion betweene God and Idols.*

Neither will wee ſay any more to the workes of our hands, ye are our gods; for in thee the Fatherleſſe findeth mercy. There muſt be a renouncing of falſe worſhip, Religion, and confidence, before we can truſt in God. *Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon*, ſaith Chriſt. We cannot ſerve Chriſt and Antichriſt together, we may as well bring North and South, Eaſt and Weſt together, and mingle light and darkeneſſe, as mixe two oppoſite Religions. You ſee here, one of them is diſclaimed, ere affiance be placed in the other. Therfore the halters betwixt two Religions are heere condemned. It was excellent well ſaid by *Ioſhua*. They had there ſome mixture of falſe worſhip, and thought therewith to ſerve alſo *Iehovah*: no (ſaith he) *you cannot ſerve Iehovah,*

Mat. 6. 24.

Ioſh. 24. 19.

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hovah. What is *Ioshuahs* meaning, when he saith they could not? not onely that they had no power of themselves; but you are a naughty false people, you thinke to jumble Gods worship, and that of Heathens together; *you cannot serve God* thus. So a man may say to those who looke *Rome*-wards for worldly ends, and yet will be Protestants, *you cannot serve God*, you cannot be sound Christians, halting thus betwixt both. These are not compatible, they cannot stand together; you must disclaime the one, if you will cleave to the other, we see the ground heere: *Neither will wee say any more to the workes of our hands, ye are our gods; for, in thee the Fatherlesse findeth mercy.*

Againe, whereas upon disclaiming of false confidence in the creatures and Idols, they name this as a ground, *For in thee the Fatherlesse findeth mercy*; observe,

Observ. *In what measure and degree we apprehend God aright to be the All-sufficient true God, in that measure we cast away all false confidence whatsoever.*

The right apprehending of God shakes off all false trust. The more or lesse we conceive of God as we should doe, so the more or lesse wee disclaime confidence in the creature. Those who in their affections of joy, love, affiance and delight, are taken up too much with the creature (say what they will) professe to all the world by their practise, that they know not God. By the contrary, those who know and apprehend him in his greatnesse and goodnesse, as hee should be apprehended, in that proportion they with-

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draw their affections from the creature and all things elſe. It is with the ſoule in this caſe, as with a ballance, if the one skale be drawne downe by a waight put in it, the other is lifted up. So where God weighs downe in the ſoule, all other things are light, and where other things prevaile, there God is ſet light. *Aſſur ſhall not ſave us*; for hee can doe us no good: nor *Horſes*, becauſe they are vaine helps. How attained they to this light eſteeme of *Aſſur* and *Horſes*? *For in thee the Fatherleſſe findeth mercy*. That which is taken from the creature they find in God. And this is the Reaſon why the world ſo maligne good and ſound Chriſtians, they thinke, when God gets, that they looſe a feather (as wee ſay) ſome of their ſtrength: ſurely ſo it is; for when a Chriſtian turnes to God and becomes ſound, he comes to have a meane eſteeme of that which formerly was great in his ſight; his judgement is otherwiſe, as we ſee here, *Aſſur*, *Horſes*, *Idols*, and all they eſteeme nothing of them. *Horſes* and the like are good, uſefull and neceſſary to ſerve Gods providence in the uſe of meanes, not to truſt in or make co-ordinate with God. In the world eſpecially great perſons would be gods in the hearts of people; therefore, when they ſee any make conſcience of their waies; they thinke they looſe them; becauſe now they will doe nothing but what may ſtand with the favour of God. Thus farre from the *Connexion*. Now to the words themſelves.

Simile.

Why the world hates Chriſtians eſcaped from them.

For

For in thee the Fatherleſſe findeth mercy.

Wherein we have ſet forth unto us for our conſideration of Gods rich goodneſſe towards poore miſerable ſinners,

1. *The Attribute of God, Mercy.*
2. *The fit Object thereof, The Fatherleſſe.*

Mercy is Gods ſweeteſt Attribute, which ſweetneth all his other Attributes; for but for Mercy, whatſoever elſe is in God, were matter of terror to us. His Juſtice would affright us: His Holineſſe likewiſe (conſidering our impurity) would drive us from him: *Depart from me* (ſaith *Peter* to our Saviour) *for I am a ſinnefull man*; and when the Prophet *Iſay* ſaw God in his excellencie a little: *Then he ſaid, woe is me, for I am undone, becauſe I am a man of uncleane lips, &c.* His Power is terrible, it would confound us, His Majeſty aſtoniſh us. O, but Mercy mitigates all, he that is great in Majeſty is abounding in mercy; he that hath beames of Majeſty hath bowels of mercy. O, this draweth, eſpecially miſerable perſons. *In thee the Fatherleſſe findeth mercy.* And now, in the *Covenant of Grace*, this *mercy* ſets all a worke. For it is the *mercy* of God by which wee triumph now in the Covenant of Grace, in that *mercy* which ſtirr'd up his wiſedome to finde out a way for *mercy* by ſatisfying his *Juſtice*: So that the firſt mooving Attribute of God that ſet him a worke about that great worke of our ſalvation, by Jeſus Chriſt, in the Covenant of Grace, was *mercy*, his tender *mercy*,

Mercy is that ſweet Attribute that makes us partake of all the reſt.

Luke 5.8.

Iſa. 6.5.

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Mercy in God supposeth misery in the creature, either present or possible: for there is 1. A Preventing. 2. A rescuing mercy.

A *Preventing mercy*, whereby the creature is freed from possible misery, that it might fall into, as it is his mercy that we are not such sinners in that degree as others are; and every man that hath understanding is beholding to God for their Preventing, as well as for their Rescuing mercy. Wee thinke God is mercifull onely to those unto whom he forgives great sins: O, he is mercifull to thee that standeth, thou mightest have fallen fowly else. Mercy supposeth misery either that wee are in or may fall into. So that mercy in God may admit of a threefold consideration.

1. It supposeth *Sinne*; so there is a *Pardoning mercy* for that. Or

2. *Misery*, that is, a *Delivering mercy*. Or

3. *Defect or want in the Creature*, which is, *Supplying mercy*.

Whersoever *mercy* is conversant, it is usually about one of these three, either *Sinne*, or *Misery*, or *Defects and wants*, that is, to Persons in misery: for indeed the word is more generall then *Fatherlesse*; Deserted persons, that are forsaken of others, and have no strength of their owne, they are heere meant by the *Fatherlesse*, who have no meanes, wisedome, power or ability of their

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their owne, but are deserted and forsaken of others, whence the chiefe truth that offers it selfe to be considered of us is this,

Observe.

That God is especially mercifull to those Persons who stand most in need of mercy.

Why God is so ready to shew mercy to the Fatherlesse?

First, because *these doe relish mercy most*, and give him the glory of it, applying themselves most to his *mercy*, being beaten out of the creature: and the more we have communion with God being driven out of the creature and other comforts, the more he discovers himselfe to us: as the neerer we are to the fire, the hotter it is, so the neerer wee are to God, the more good and gratious hee every way shewes himselfe unto us. Now what makes us neere him, but extremity of misery, whereby we are beaten from all other holds whatsoever. It is acknowledged to be his worke, when hee doth it for those that are deserted of all others, then he hath the chiefe glory of it. This is one end why God suffers his children to fall into extreamity of great sorrowes and perplexities, to fall very low in depths of miseries (as the Scripture speakes) that hee might discover a depth of his *mercy*, beyond the depth of their misery, to shew that there is a depth deeper then that depth, for their misery is finite, O but the bowels of his compassions are infinite both in measure and time: *His mercy endureth for ever.*

Hos. 5. 15.

Psal. 131. 1.

Psal. 136.

Againe, *GOD is jealous of their affiance and confidence*, knowing that naturally, unlesse wee fall into some straites and weaning extremities,

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wee ſhall place our affiance upon the creature; therefore hee deales thus with us. He knowes our ſickneſſe well enough, that we are deſperatly addicted to preſent things, therefore to cure this ſickneſſe in us, he drawes us by extremities from the creature to himſelfe, which when it failes wee goe to him. *Helpe Lord*; why? *for vaine is the helpe of man*, it is time then to helpe. *Helpe Lord, for the godly are periſhed from the earth.* It is time to helpe Lord, for if thou doe not, none will, whereby they come to have their confidence upon the rocke, which is worth all. Other men they run from creature to creature, from helpe to helpe, as ſicke bodies doe, to this and to that drug, and to this and that potion, they ſeeke to many things to beg comfort from; but a Chriſtian hath a ſure foundation that hee may ſtay upon, *In thee the Fatherleſſe findeth mercy.*

Pſal.60.11. Pſal.12.1.

To come now to ſpeake of the words as they lie in the whole, they carry another inſtruction;

Obſerv. *That God is very gratious and mercifull to fatherleſſe and diſtreſſed perſons.*

As we have it, *Pſal.*10.18. *That God will judge the fatherleſſe and oppreſſed, that the man of the earth may no more oppreſſe.* So *Pſal* 146.9. It is ſaid, *The Lord preſerveth the ſtrangers, hee releeveth the fatherleſſe and widdow, &c.* And for the generall wee have it, *The Lord releeveth all that fall, and raiſeth up all that be bowed downe.* God hee opens his eare to heare their crie, to judge the fatherleſſe and the oppreſſed, the like

Pſal.145.14.

like we have in *Exodus*. *Alſo thou ſhalt not oppreſſe a ſtranger*, for ye know the heart of a ſtranger, ſeeing yee were ſtrangers in the land of Ægypt, and *Exod.* 22. 23. ſaith he, *Thou ſhalt not afflict any widdow or fatherleſſe childe; if thou afflict them in any wiſe, and they cry at all unto me, I will ſurely heare their crie.* Theſe among many, are direct places to ſhew the truth of this, that God is mercifull, not only in generall, but to thoſe perſons ſet downe by a *Synechdoche*, a figure where one is ſet downe for all of the ſame kinde. God is mercifull to all perſons, in any kind of miſery or diſtreſſe whatſoever, as the Apoſtle ſpeakes, God is he *who comforteth the abject perſon*: the forlorne, the caſtaway perſons of the world, and he is *a very preſent helpe in trouble*. So as when there are none to helpe, then he awaketh and rouſeth up himſelfe to lay hold for us, *His owne arme brings ſalvation for his owne ſake*. So when there is miſery and none to helpe, God will finde cauſe and ground from his owne bowells to ſhew mercy, to take pitty and compaſſion upon his poore Church and Children. Which ſhould teach us,

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Exod. 23. 9.

2 Cor. 7. 6.
Pſal. 46. 1.
Iſa. 41 17.
Iſa. 59 16.
Iſa. 63. 5.
Iſa. 48. 9.

First of all, *To take notice of this moſt excellent Attribute of God*, and to make uſe of it upon all occaſions, at our moſt need, then to preſent to our ſoules God thus deſcribed and ſet out by his owne Spirit, to be *Hee that comforteth the Abject*, and ſheweth mercy to the fatherleſſe and oppreſſed: this we ſhould make uſe of for the Church in generall, and for every one of our

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our ſelves in particular. The Church hath beene a long time like a forlorne widdow as it were; God hath promiſed that he will have a care of the widdow and the fatherleſſe, and ſo hee will of his poore Church. We ſee in the Parable, the widdow with her importunity prevailed with an unrighteous Judge: the Church now being like a widdow, what is wanting but a ſpirit of ſupplication and Prayer, which ſpirit if the Church had to wraſtle with God and lay hold upon him as *Iaakob* did, and not ſuffer God to reſt till he had mercy on his poore Church: Corrainely it would be better with it then it is, for God comforteth the widdow, if one, what will hee doe for the whole Spouſe which hath ſo long beene a deſpicable and forlorne widdow. And for the time to come, It ought to miniſter matter of comfort for the Church; certainely, God that is mercifull to the *Fatherleſſe*, he will be mercifull to the poore Church. We ſee in the *Revelation*, though the Woman was perſecuted by the Dragon, yet there were given two wings of a great Eagle to her that ſhee might flie unto the wilderneſſe, where ſhe had a place provided of God. It alludes to the ſtory of the *Iſraelites* when they came out of *Ægypt*, God provided for them in the wilderneſſe, they had *Manna* from Heaven, and water out of the rocke, and till they came to *Canaan*, God provided every way for them in a marvellous manner. So God will be ſure to provide for his in the wilderneſſe

Luke 18,5.

Hoſ 12.4. Iſa.62.7.

Rev.12.14.

of

of this world, he will have a harbour still for the Church, and a hiding place from the stormy tempests of her adversaries. Therefore let us not despaire, but stirre up a spirit of Prayer for the Church: that he who shewes mercy to the *Fatherlesse*, and commands mercy to be shewed to the widdow; that he would shew that himselfe, which he requires of us. And why may not we hope and trust for it? The Church in this world is as is were *a fatherlesse person*, a *Pupill*, an *Orphan*, a *Sheepe* in the midst of *wolves*, as *Daniell* in the lyons den, as a *ship* tossed in the waves, as a *lillie* among thornes, it is invironed with enemies, and of it selfe, (like the poore sheepe) is shiftlesse. What is the Church but a company of weake persons? not so witty for the world as worldly wise men are, nor so strong in the arme of flesh, nor so defended: but a company of persons who have a hidden dependance upon God, wee know not how, and hang as it were by a threed: as the Church in this land, and abroad in other places. The true Church is maintained we know not how: God keepes up Religion, the Church and all, because he is mercifull to the Fatherlesse, who have no shifting wits as the worldly *Achitophels* have. God is wise for them that are not wise for themselves, and powerfull for them, that have little strength of their owne. Therefore, let us not be discouraged though we be weake creatures, a little flock, like a company of sheepe, yee notwithstanding wee have a strong Shepheard. Isa. 4. 5, 6. Psal. 23. 1.

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The Church is like a vine, a poore despicable withered, crooked, weake plant, which windes about, and must be supported or else it sinkes to the ground, yet it is a fruitfull plant. So the Church of God, a number of weake Christians professing Religion, they want many helps, yet God supports them, and hath ordained this and that haven for them: as this Magistrate, and that Person, God hath one support or other for them. While they are fruitfull and true Vines, God will have a care of them, though they be never so weake and despised in the eye of the world.

Isa. 5. 1, 7.

Isa. 54. 11.

Vse. 2. Againe, this should teach us, *to make God our All-sufficiency in all estates whatsoever*, and not to goe one haires breadth from a good conscience for feare of afterclaps. I may be cast into prison, I may loose my goods. What of all this? is not God All-sufficient? and is not he especially seene in comforting of those who stand in most need of comfort, who want other helpes? and will he be indebted to any man who stands out in a good quarrell for his cause? will he not give needfull supply, if not in this world, yet in a better of all comforts whatsoever? It is a good supply, when the losse is in outward things, and the supply in inward peace, grace and strength; it is a happy losse that is lost to the advantage. There was never any man yet from the beginning of the world, who lost by cleaving to Religion and good causes, God ever made it up one way or other. Therefore this is

Isa. 41. 17.

Isa. 60. 17.

Isa. 64. 5.

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a ground of courage, to caſt our ſelves upon doing good when God offers the occaſion, relying upon God as *Heſter* did; *If I periſh I periſh*, ſhe meant, *If I periſh, I ſhall not periſh*; ſuch have a better condition in the love and favour of God then they had before, or ſhould have had, if they had not periſhed. It is the way not to periſh, ſo to periſh: it is as cleare and true as the Sun-ſhine: but we want faith to beleeve it. Eſt. 4. 16.

And then againe, let us make uſe of it in another kinde, to reſiſt another temptation, what will become of my poore children, if I doe thus and thus, ſtand thus and thus, and goe on in my innocency? What will become of thy children? it was well ſpoken by *Lactantius*, *Becauſe God would have men ſtand out and die in a good cauſe willingly; therefore hee hath promiſed in a ſpeciall manner to be a Father to the Fatherleſſe, and a Husband to the Widow.* Are wee the chiefe Fathers of our children? No, wee are but under God to bring thoſe who are his children into the world, we are but inſtruments, God is the chiefe Father, beſt and laſt Father, *The everlaſting Father*; who takes upon him to be a Father to the Fatherleſſe, whom he chargeth all not to hurt. Experience ſhewes, how hee bleſſeth the poſterity of the righteous, who have ſtood in defence of the truth. Therefore, let us make no pretences either for baſeneſſe, dejection of ſpirit, or covetouſneſſe to keepe us from well-doing, for God will reward all. *Vſe 3.* Iſa. 9. 6.

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Quest. O say some, I could be content not to be so worldly, but it is for my children.

Answ. What saith the Apostle, *Let those who are married be as if they were not married*, meaning in regard of this scraping of wealth together by unlawfull meanes of covetousnesse, or in regard of readinesse to doe workes of mercy. What doth God appoint one Ordinance of marriage to take a man off of all good duties? No, notwithstanding this we must doe fitting workes of mercy; God will be the Father of the Fatherlesse. Many use oppression, and goe to Hell themselves, to make their children rich. Who commands us to make our children in shew a while happy here, to make our soules and bodies miserable for ever. There is a moderate care (as the Apostle speakes) so that *he who cares not for his owne is worse then an infidell*; but we must not make this pretence to excuse injurious and extortive courses: But let God alone; he will doe all things well, trust him. Or, if any thing should befall us otherwise then well; what if it doe? God is the God of the Fatherlesse, whatsoever he takes away he supplies it better another way. For whence have the creatures that infusion to helpe? Is it not from God? and when the creature is taken away, is not God where he was?

1 Cor. 7. 29.

1 Tim. 4. 8.

Vse 4. And let us also learne hence; that we answer Gods dealing in shewing mercy to the Fatherlesse and such as stand in need, as the Apostle exhorts, *Put on therefore, as the Elect of God (holy*

Coloss. 3. 12.

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(*holy and Beloved*) *bowells of mercies, &c.* as if hee should say, as you would proove your selves to be Elect, members of Christ and children of God, so shew your likenesse in this particular, *The bowells of mercy and compassion.* This hath ever beene, and yet is at all times a character of Gods children, and shall be to the end of the world. It is a signe such a one hath found bowels of mercy, that is ready upon all occasions to powre forth those bowels of compassion upon others: as hard-heartednesse this way, shewes a disposition which yet hath not rightly tasted of mercy. As we say in another case, those that are appeased in their consciences, in the sense of the forgivenesse of sinnes, they are peaceable to others, because they feele peace. So here, those that feele mercy, will be mercifull; those that have felt love, will be loving to others. *A good man is mercifull to his beast, but the mercies of the wicked are cruell.* Pro. 12. 10. Those therefore that are hard-hearted and unmercifull, hardening themselves against the complaints of the miserable: there is (for the present) no comfort for them, that the Spirit of God hath wrought any change in their hearts, for then it would stampe the image of God upon them, they would be mercifull to the fatherlesse, widow, and distressed persons. What shall wee thinke then of a generation of men, who by griping usury and the like courses have made many widowes miserable? Let such professe what they will, whilest they are thus hard-

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hard-hearted, they have not the bowels of Chriſt. God is ſo mercifull, that you ſee (as the Jewes call them) hee hath hedges of the commandements, that is, he hath ſome remote commands which are not of the maine, and all to hedge from cruelty: as, *Thou ſhalt not kill the Dam upon the neſt. Thou ſhalt not ſeeth a kid in his mothers milke.* What tends this too? nothing but to ſhew the mercy and bowels of God, and that hee would have us to abſtaine from cruelty. He that would not have us *Murther*, would have us keepe aloofe of, and not be mercileſſe to the very dumbe creatures, birds and beaſt: therefore, let us labour to expreſſe the image of our heavenly Father in this.

Exod. 23. 19.

Vſe 5.

Againe, we ſhould uſe this as a plea againſt dejectednesse at the houre of death, in regard of thoſe we leave behind us; not to be troubled what ſhall become of them, when wee are to yeeld up our ſoules to God: but know that hee hath undertaken to be, *the Father of the Fatherleſſe and of the Widow.* Therefore, for ſhame, for ſhame, learne as to live, ſo to die by faith: and as to die by faith in other things, ſo to die in this faith, that God as he will receive thy ſoule, ſo he will receive the care of thy poſterity. Canſt thou with affiance yeeld up thy ſoule unto God, and wilt thou not with the ſame confidence yeeld thy poſterity. Thou art an Hypocrite if this diſtract and vexe thee, when yet thou pretendeſt to die in the faith of Chriſt. Canſt thou yeeld thy ſoule, and yet art grieved for thy poſterity?

poſterity? no, leave it to God: he is All-ſufficient, *The earth is the Lords, and the fullneſſe thereof.* Wee need not feare to put our portion in his hands, he is rich enough, *The earth and all is his.* Therefore, when we are in any extreamity whatſoever, relie on this mercy of ſo rich and powerfull a God, improove it, for it is our portion, eſpecially in a diſtreſſed condition. Were it not for Faith wrought by the bleſſed Spirit of God, he would looſe the glory of this Attribute of *Mercy*. Now Faith is a wiſe power of the ſoule, that ſees in God what is fit for it, ſingling out in God what is fit for the preſent occaſion of diſtreſſe. Is a man in any extremity of miſery, let him looke to mercy. Is a man oppreſſed, let him looke to mercy to be revenged of his enemies: is a man in any perplexity, let him looke to mercy, joyned with wiſedome, which is able to deliver him. Religion is nothing elſe but an application of the ſoule to God: and a fetching out of him ſomewhat (as he hath diſcovered himſelfe in the Covenant) fit for all our exigents; as there is ſomewhat in God, and in the Promiſes, for all eſtates of the ſoule. Faith therefore is wittie to looke to that in God which is fit for its turne. Let us therefore take heed of Satans policie herein: who in our extreamity uſeth this as a weapon to ſhake our Faith. *Tuſh* (as it is in the Pſalme) *God hath forſaken and forgotten him.* Hath he ſo? nay, becauſe I am in extremity and deſerted above others, rather God now regards me

Pſal. 24. 1.

Faith wittie to ſingle out in God what it needs in the preſent.

Satans policie in our extremity, how to retort it.

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more then before, because, *hee scourgeth every Sonne whom he receiveth.* So retort Satans fiery darts backe againe. For indeed that is the time wherein God exalts and shewes himselfe most glorious and triumphant in *mercy*, where misery is greatest. *Where sinne abounds there grace abounds much more*, so where misery abounds, mercy superabounds much more. Therefore let us be as wise for our soules, as Satan can be malicious against them, what hee useth for a weapon to wound the soule, use the same as a weapon against him.

Heb. 12.6.

Rom. 5.20.

There is that in God to meet all the wants of his people

To end all, *let Faith in Gods mercy answer this his description*; and let it be a description ingrafted into us at such a time. Doth God care for the fatherlesse, & meane persons who are cast down & afflicted? why then, I will trust that God who doth so, being in this case my self. If he will help in *Extremity*, trust him in *Extremity*: If hee will helpe in *distresse*, trust him in *distresse*: if he will helpe when all *forsake*, trust him when wee are *forsaken* of all. What if a streame be taken away? yet none can take away God from thee: what if a beame be taken away? thou hast the Sun it selfe: what if a particular comfort be taken away, so long as God, *who comforteth the abject*, and is *mercifull* to the *distressed*, *Fatherlesse* and *Widdowes* continues with thee, thou needs not feare. A man cannot want comfort and mercy, so long as the *Father of mercies* is in covenant with him. If he *sinne*, he hath *Pardoning mercy* for him; if *weake*, hee hath

Habak. 3.17.

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hath *Strengthening mercy*; if in *darkeneſſe*, hee hath *Quickning mercy*; if we be *dull*, *dead*, and in *danger*, there is *Reſcuing mercy*, and if *ſubject to dangers we may fall in*, there is for that, *Preventing mercy*. Therefore there is *mercy* ready to compaſſe Gods children about in all conditions, when they are invironed with dangers, yet God is neerer to guard their ſoules, then the danger is to hurt them. Pſal. 32.10.

Therefore let us take the counſell of the bleſſed Apoſtle, *Be carefull for nothing, but in every thing by Prayer and ſupplication, with thankſgiving let your requeſts be knowne to God*: and what then, will God grant that I pray for? perhaps hee will not. But yet, *The Peace of God which paſſeth all underſtanding, ſhall guard your hearts and mindes through Chriſt Ieſus*. As if he ſhould ſay, in nothing be over-carefull, let your care be when ye have uſed the meanes, to depend upon God for ſupport in the event and iſſue of all. If God denie you what you pray for, he will grant you that which is better: he will ſet up an excellent inward peace there, whereby hee will ſtabliſh the ſoule in aſſurance of his love, pardon of ſinnes and reconciliation: whereby their ſoules ſhall be guarded, and their hearts and mindes preſerved in Chriſt: ſo they become impregnable in all miſeries whatſoever, when they have *the Peace of God which paſſeth all underſtanding* to guard them within. Therefore, let us not betray and looſe our comforts, for want of making uſe of them; or for feare ſome Phil. 4.6,7.

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should call us Hypocrites: and on the other side, let us not flatter our selves in an evill course: but make the conscience good, which will beare us out in all miseries, dangers, and difficulties whatsoever. Nothing makes losses, crosses, banishment, imprisonment, and death so terrible and out of measure dreadfull unto us, but the inward guilt and sting in the inside, the tumults of conscience. Cleere this well once, make all whole within, let conscience be right and straight; let it have its just use and measure of truth and uprightnesse; and goe thy way in peace, I warrant thee, thou shalt hold up thy head, and winde thy selfe out of all dangers well enough: nothing shall daunt or appale thy courage: for saith *Salomon*, *The Righteous is bold as a Lyon*; what can, what should he feare, who is heire of all things, whose all things are, and who is reconciled to God in Christ, having all the Angels and Creatures for his servants: for whose sake, all things must needs work together for good.

Gen. 42. 21.

Pro. 28. 1.

Revel. 21. 7.

Heb. 1. 14.

Rom. 8. 28.

The end of the fourth Sermon.

THE

THE FIFTH SERMON.

Hos. 14. 4.

I will heale their backesliding, I will love them freely, for mine Anger is turned away from them.

THE superabounding mercies and marvellous loving kindnesses of a gratious and loving God to wretched and miserable sinners (as we have heard) is the substance and sum of this short sweet Chapter, wherein their ignorance is taught, their bashfullnesse is incouraged, their deadnesse is quickned, their untowardnesse is pardoned, their wounds are cured, all their objections and petitions

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ons anſwered: ſo as a large and open paſſage is made unto them and all other miſerable penitent ſinners for acceſſe unto the throne of grace. If they want words, they are taught what to ſay; if diſcouraged for ſins paſt, they are incouraged that ſinne may be taken away; yea all iniquity may be taken away; *Take away all iniquity*; if their unworthineſſe hinder them, they are taught for this, That God is gratious: *Receive us gratiouſly*; if their by-paſt unthankfullneſſe be any barre of hinderance unto them; they are taught to promiſe thankfullneſſe: *So will we render the Calves of our lips.* And that their Repentance may appeare to be ſound and unfained, they are brought in, making profeſſion of their deteſtation of their boſome ſins of falſe confidence and Idolatry: *Aſſur ſhall not ſave us, wee will not ride upon Horſes: neither will we ſay any more to the workes of our hands, ye are our gods.* And not onely doe they reject their falſe confidence, to ceaſe from evill, but they doe good, and pitch their affiance where it ſhould be: For, *in thee the Fatherleſſe findeth mercy.*

None muſt therefore be diſcouraged or run away from God, for what they have beene; for there may be a returning. God may have a time for them, who in his wiſe diſpenſation doth bring his children to diſtreſſe, that their delivery may be ſo much the more admired by themſelves and others, to his glory and their good. He knowes us better then we our ſelves how prone we are to leane upon the creature,

there-

therefore hee is faine to take from us all our props and supports, whereupon we are forced to relie upon him. If we could doe this of our selves, it were an excellent worke and an undoubted evidence of the child of God, that hath a weaned soule in the midst of outward supports, to enjoy them, as if he possessed them not, not to be puft up with present greatnesse, not to swell with riches, nor be high minded: to consider of things to be as they are, weake things, (subordinate to God) which can helpe no further, then as he blesseth them. But to come to the words now read.

I will heale their backesliding and love them freely, &c.

After that the Church had shewed her Repentance and truth of returning to God: now in these words and the other verses unto the end of the Chapter, (saving the last verse, which is a kind of acclamation issuing from all the rest of the foregoing verses, *who is wise and hee shall understand these things, &c.*) is set downe an answer unto that prayer, Repentance and reformation which the Church made, all the branches of which their former sute, the Lord doth punctually answer. For they had formerly prayed, *Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, doe good unto us:* unto which he answers here,

I will heale their backeslidings, &c.

Which is thus much, I will pardon their iniquities, I will accept graciously of them, I will

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love them freely, and so of the rest, as will appeare afterwards, and in summe, God answers all those desires which formerly he had stirred up in his people. Whence ere we come to the particulars, observe in generall,

Observ. *Where God doth give a spirit of prayer he will answer.*

It needs no proofe, the point is so cleere and experimentall, all the Saints can say this much from their experience of Gods gratious dealing with them: and the Scriptures are full of such instances and promises, which we all know. To name a place or two for all the rest. *Call upon mee in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorifie mee.* Psal. 50. 15. So in another place, *And it shall come to passe that before they call I will answer, and whilst they speake I will heare.* Isa. 65. 24. It hath beene made good to *Persons*, as *Daniel*, *Elias*, *Salomon*, *Iaakob* and others, and it hath beene, and is made good unto all ages of the Church from time to time, and shall be unto the end of the world. And therefore the Prophet sets downe this as a conclusion undeniable from the premises, *O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come,* Psal. 65. 2. whence he drawes this excellent consolation. *Iniquities prevaile against mee; as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.*

Reason. The Reason is strong, because they are the motions of his owne Spirit which he stirs up in us. For, hee dictates this Prayer unto them: *Take with you words, &c. and say unto the Lord,*

Take

Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciouſly. So that, where God ſtirs up holy deſires by his Spirit, hee will anſwer exactly, there ſhall not a ſigh be loſt. *Likewiſe* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *the Spirit alſo helpes our infirmities: for we know not what we ſhould pray for as wee ought, but the Spirit it ſelfe makes interceſſion for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.* Therefore there cannot a groane be loſt, nor a darting of a ſigh, whatſoever is ſpirituall muſt be effectuall, though it cannot be vented in words. For God hath an eare not onely neere a mans tongue to know what he ſaith, but alſo in a mans heart, to know what he deſires, or would have. As the obſerving carefull tender mother many times knowes what the child would have though it cannot ſpeake: ſo God hee knowes the deſires, ſighs, and groanes of the heart when we cannot ſpeake. For, ſometimes there may be ſuch a confuſion upon the ſoule, by reaſon of divers diſturbances, that it cannot expreſſe nor vent it ſelfe in words, therefore the Spirit vents it ſelfe then in ſighs and groanes which are heard and accepted: becauſe they are the deſires of his owne Spirit. This much the Prophet *David* excellently ſheweth: *Lord thou haſt heard the deſire of the humble, thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cauſe thine eare to heare.* God he firſt prepares the heart to pray, then his eare to heare their prayers and deſires. If this will not incourage us to be much in ſuit to God, and put up our petitions to him, to labour for a ſpirit of

Rom. 8. 26.

That God hath an eare in mans heart.

Pſal. 10. 17.

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A ſtrong motive to draw us before God in Prayer.

of prayer; I know not what will prevaile: when we know that no petition ſhall be turned back againe unanſwered. When wee are to deale with Princes upon earth, they oftentimes regard neither the perſons nor their petitions, but turne their backes upon both. O! but a Chriſtian hath the eare of God and Heaven open unto him: ſuch credit in Heaven, that his deſires and groanes are reſpected and heard. And undoubtedly a man may know that he ſhall be heard, when he hath a ſpirit of prayer, in one kind or other, though not in the particulars, or kindes we aske; heare he will for our good. God will not looſe the incenſe of his owne Spirit, of a ſpirit of prayer which he ſtirs up, it is ſo precious: Therefore let us labour to have a ſpirit of prayer, which God regards ſo much: Seeing for a certaine, whereſoever he gives a ſpirit of prayer hee meanes to give that we pray for, but according to his heavenly wiſedome, as here his anſwer is,

I will heale their Backeſliding, I will love them freely, &c.

God anſwers them exactly unto all they praid for, beginning firſt with the ground of all our comfort, *forgiveneſſe of ſinne*, According to their petition, *Take away all iniquity*: he anſwers, *I will heale their backeſliding*, or their rebellion. *Backeſliding* is an aggravation of ſin: every ſinne is not a rebellion, Apoſtaſie, or backſliding, for there be alſo ſins of infirmities, we uſually ranck ſins thus, in

1. *Sinnes*

1. *Sinnes of Ignorance.*
2. *Sinnes of Infirmity.*
3. *Sinnes against knowledge, with a higher hand.* And
4. *The Sinnes against the Holy Ghost.*

Now this is more then to cure sinnes of *Ignorance*, and of *Infirmity*, when he saith, *I will heale their backesliding.*

But why doth he answer the higher pitch of an aggravation, when their petition was in a lower straine onely, (*Take away all iniquity.*) *Quest.*

To shew, that he would answer them fully, that is, that he would heale all sinnes whatsoever: not onely of Ignorance, and of Infirmity; but also sinnes willingly committed, their rebellions and backeslidings. For indeed they were backesliding; from the time of *Iroboam*, that made the rent, the ten tribes grew worse and worse continually, so that they had beene utterly extinguished, but that God was wondrous gracious to send them Prophets, to preserve many that they should not bow the knee to *Baall*, being mercifull to them, to beare with their backesliding so long: for besides their calves, they had false gods, they did not onely worship the true God in a false manner by the calves, but they had *Baals* also. So that we see God when hee will comfort, will comfort to purpose, and take away all objections that the soule can make; a guilty soule being full of objections; O my sinnes are many, great, rebellions, and Apostacies: But, be they what they *Answ.*

they will, Gods mercy in Chriſt is greater and more. *I will heale their backeſliding*, or their rebellion, God is above conſcience, let Satan terrifie the conſcience as he will, and let conſcience ſpeake the worſt it can againſt it ſelfe, yet God is greater. Therefore let the ſinne be what it will, God will pardon all manner of ſinnes; as they pray to pardon all, ſo he will *take away all iniquity, heale their backeſliding*. But to come neerer the words.

I will heale, &c.

The healing meant here, is eſpecially in the pardon of their ſinnes, anſwerable to their deſires in juſtification. And there is a healing alſo in ſanctification by the Spirit: when God takes away the venome from the wound, then God cures in ſanctification; both are meant; but eſpecially the firſt. In a wound we know there is,

1. *The malignity and venome of it*, and then,
2. *The wound is ſelfe ſo feſtered and rankled.*

Now pardoning grace in juſtification, takes away the anguiſh and malice of the wound, ſo that it ceaſeth to be ſo malignant and deadly as to kill, or infect. And then ſanctification purgeth and cleanſeth the wound, and heales it up. Now God through Chriſt doth both. The blood of Chriſt doth heale the guilt of ſinne, which is the anger and malignity of it. And by the Spirit of Chriſt he heales the wound it ſelfe, and purgeth out the ſicke and peccant humor by little and little through ſanctification: God is a perfect healer, *I will heale their backeſliding.*

SER. V.

That the ſtate of the Church and Gods children is prone to backſliding.

ſliding. See here the ſtate of the Church and Children of God, they are prone to backeſliding and turning away: we are naturally prone to decline further and further from God. So the Church of God planted in a family in the beginning of the world, how ſoone was it prone to backeſliding, this is one weakeneſſe ſince the fall, it is incident to our nature to be unſetled and unſteady in our holy reſolutions. And whilſt we live in the midſt of temptations, the world, together with the fickleneſſe of our owne nature, evill examples, and Satans perpetuall malice againſt God and the poore Church, are ill Pilots to lead us out of the way. This is ſpoken to make us carefull how to ſhunne *Backſliding*, for we ſee how many opinions are foiſted in amongſt us, and have got ſome head, that durſt not before once be named amongſt us. Popery ſpreads it ſelfe amaine; even Churches are prone to backſliding. Therefore S. *Paules* advice is, *Be not high minded, but feare, for if God ſpared not the naturall branches, take heed leaſt hee alſo ſpare not thee.* What is become of *Rome*, ſo the ſame will become of us, if wee ſtop not our backſlidings.

Rom. 11. 20, 21.

Now in that Gods promiſe is, *I will heale their backſlidings*, obſerve in the firſt place.

That ſinne is a wound, and a diſeaſe.

Obſerv. *That ſinne is a wound and diſeaſe.*

Sin is a wound.

Now as in ſickneſſe there is, 1. Griefe troubling and vexing the partie who feeles it: and 2. Deformity of the place affected, which comes by wounds and weakeneſſes. So in all ſin

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ſinne (when we are ſenſible of it) there is firſt griefe, vexation, and torment of conſcience: and then againe, deformity; for it takes away the beauty and vigour of the ſoule, and dejects the countenance, it debaſeth a man, and takes away his excellencie, as *Iacob* ſaith of *Reuben*, *Vnſtable as water, thou ſhalt not excell, becauſe thou wenteſt up to thy fathers bed.* Saith God to *Cain, why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen?* and the Prophet *David* he confeſſeth: *When I kept ſilence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.* So againe, *There is no ſoundneſſe in my fleſh, becauſe of thine anger, neither is there any reſt in my bones, becauſe of my ſinne.* So that ſinne is a wound and a diſeaſe, whether wee conſider the miſeries it brings on ſoule and body or both. Therefore howſoever a ſinfull perſon thinke himſelfe a goodly perſon, and weare his ſins as ornaments about him, Pride, Luſt and the like; yet hee is a deformed loathſome perſon in the eyes and preſence of God; and when conſcience is awakened, ſinne will be loathſome, irkſome, and odious unto himſelfe, fill him full of griefe and ſhame, ſo that he cannot endure the ſight of his owne ſoule.

Gen. 49. 4.

Gen. 4. 6.

Pſal. 32. 3, 4.

Pſal. 38. 3.

That all ſinnes are diſeaſes.

Now all ſinnes whatſoever are diſeaſes: The firſt ſinne of all ſinnes, which wee call hereditary Originall ſinne, what is it but an hereditarie diſeaſe? a leproſie which we drew from our firſt Parents, ſpread over all the ſoule, having the ſeeds and ſpawne of all ſinne in it.

The

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The Church of *Rome* makes it leſſe then other ſinnes, as indeed Popery is ignorant both of the height of grace, and of the depth of corruption; for, if they knew the one, they would be more capable of the other. Why doe they not conceive aright of grace, and of the height of it? becauſe they know not the depth of Originall ſinne. And indeed the true knowledge of thi diſeaſe is proper onely to the child of God in the true Church: none but hee knowes what Originall ſinne is, others can diſpute and talke of it, but none feeles it but the child of God. Now all other particular actuall ſinnes, be diſeaſes flowing from hence: ſo that all diſeaſes in this kinde, ariſe either 1. *from our ſelves, as wee have a ſeminarie of them in our owne hearts:* or elſe, 2. *from the infection and contagion of others:* or 3. *from Satan,* who hath ſociety with our ſpirits (as men have with the outward man) comming in by his ſuggeſtions and our intertaining of them: ſo that in that reſpect, ſin is like unto a *wound* and a *diſeaſe,* in regard of the cauſe of them.

1. *Sinne like a diſeaſe in regard of the cauſe.*

And, *in regard of the effects, ſinne is like a diſeaſe.* Diſeaſes if they be neglected, breed death it ſelfe, and become incurable; ſo it is with the diſeaſes and ſinnes of the ſoule, neglect them, and the beſt end of them will be deſpaire in this world, whereupon wee may have advantage to flie unto the mercy of God in Chriſt. This is the end of ſinne, either to end in a good deſpaire, or in a fruitleſſe barren deſpaire

2. *Sinne is like a diſeaſe in regard of the effects it breeds*

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deſpaire at the houre of death leading to Hell, when they have no grace to repent. *The wages of ſinne is death, &c.* Sinne it ſelfe is a wound, and that which riſeth from ſinne, is a wound too, doubting and deſpaire: for this diſeaſe and wound of ſinne, breeds that other diſeaſe, a deſpaire of mercy, which is the beginning of Hell, the ſecond death. Theſe things might be further inlarged, but for the preſent onely in generall, know, That ſinne is *a diſeaſe and a wound of the ſoule,* ſo much worſe then the diſeaſes of the body, by how much the ſoule is more pretious then it, and the death of the ſoule more terrible then the death of the body. *Sinne is a diſeaſe and a wound:* for, what is Pride but a ſwelling? what is Anger, but an intemperate heate of the ſoule like an Ague as it were? what is Revenge, but a wild-fire in the ſoule? what is Luſt, but a ſpreading Canker in the ſoule, tending to a conſumption? what is Covetouſneſſe, but as a ſword, a perpetuall wounder of the ſoule, piercing it through with many ſorrowes? what is Security, but as it were the Lethargie and Apoplexie of the ſoule? and ſo wee might goe on in other reſemblances.

Rom. 6 23.

Queſt. But it may be demanded, how ſhall we know that we are ſicke of this ſickneſſe and diſeaſe you ſpeake of?

Anſw. How doe wee know that we are ſicke in body? If the body be extreame cold, we know there is a diſtemper, or if it be extreame hot: ſo

if

if the ſoule be ſo extreame cold, that no heavenly Motives or ſweet Promiſes can worke upon it, ſtirre it up, then certainely there is a diſeaſe upon the ſoule.

If the ſoule be inflamed with Revenge and Anger, that ſoule is certainely diſeaſed: the temper of the ſoule is according to the paſſions thereof, a man may know by his *Paſſions*, when he hath a ſick ſoule.

If a man cannot reliſh good diet, then wee count him a ſicke man, ſo when a man cannot reliſh holy diſcourſe, nor the Ordinances of God. You have ſome men, that can reliſh nothing but profits and pleaſures, and ſuch vanities, but no divine thing, ſuch have ſicke ſoules undoubtedly.

So againe, a man may know there is a deadly ſickneſſe and ſoreneſſe upon the ſoule, 1 when it is ſenſeleſſe of its wounds, and 2 is ſenſeleſſe of that which paſſeth from it: as men (we ſay) are ready to die, when excrementall things paſſe from them without any ſenſe. So a man may know that he is deſperately ſoule-ſicke, when oathes, lies, and deceitfull ſpeeches paſſe from him, and yet he is ſenſeleſſe of them, they think not of them, they meane no harme: doth that argue a ſound ſtate of body, when a man is ſo deſperately ill, that he feeles not his bodily hurts, and is this a good ſtate of ſoule, when theſe filthy things come out from it inſenſibly? it is an argument of extreame deadneſſe of ſpirit, and irreverence, and of a deſperat ſinne-ſick

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soule, when there is no dread or awe of the Majesty of God; let such looke about them: it is an aggravation of the danger of the soule, this kind of temper. We usually say, when the stomacke is so weake that it can hold no nourishment without casting it up againe as fast as it receives it; certainely such an one is sick and in a dangerous state of body. So when a man heares and heares, and reads and reads, and digests nothing into nourishment, but all is left where he heard it; it is a signe that they have sicke soules, when their retentive power is so weake. And there is certainely some sicknesse, some dangerous obstruction in that soule, that cannot digest the wholesome Word of God to make use of it; some noysome lust then certainely obstructs the soule which must be purged out.

It is a pittifull thing to see the desperate condition of many now, who though they live under the tyrannie of sinne, yet flatter their owne disease, and account them their greatest enemies, who any way oppose their sicke humour. What doe they most cordially hate? the sound preaching of the Word; the very sight of such an one, whose calling hath beene to put us in minde of our sinnes, evill courses, and vanities of the world, is loathsome and offensive to carnall men, in whom corruption is growne up to such a tyranny, that it swayes the whole soule to devise how to satisfie it. Man is so diseased, that those lusts in him (which he

should

should labour to subdue and mortifie by the power of the Spirit) doe so over-sway him, that all his life is nothing else, but *a disease and backsliding* into sin. And as if we were not corrupt enough our selves, how many are there who feed their corruptions, when they frequent ill places and company, whom they cannot be without, and are as fish in the water, feeding the old man in them. So that such are not only sick, but defend, maintaine, and feed their sickness, their whole life being spent this way: which they laugh at, and make *Pride their chaine and ornament*, as the Prophet speakes. This is spoken that we may take up a lamentation for the vilenesse of mans nature, and to teach us how to judge aright of men, when they devise how to have their libery strengthened to goe to Hell (as it were) with an high hand: having their will so fortified that no man is able to deale with them, thwart them, or teach them any thing. If it were offered to most men to have what estate they would in this world: what are their wishes and desires? O, that I might live as I list, that I might have what would content my pleasures, without controule, that I might have no crosses, but goe smoothly on: yet this which is the desire of most men, is the most cursed estate of all, and most to be lamented. Thus it appeareth, *Sinne is a wound and a disease*: what Use may we make of it?

If this be so, then in the first place, let us know and consider, That no man who lives in sinnes *Use* 1.

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unrepented of and uncured is to be envied, be they never ſo great. Who will envie a man that hath a rotten body covered over with glorious attire? when every man knowes that he carries a rotten diſeaſe about him, either ſome diſeaſe in the vitall parts, or from the rottenneſſe of ſin, which puts a kind of ſhame and ſcorne. Can we pittie a man thus in glorious attire having a filthy body under it, thus covering their nakedneſſe, in whoſe caſe we would not for any thing be: and are they not much more to be pitied who have ulcerous ſoules, galled and pierced through with many ſinnes? when we ſee men that are blaſphemers, ſwearers, men guilty of much blood and filthineſſe, and of many ſinnes hanging upon them, to envie ſuch a mans greatneſſe, is extreame folly. O, he carries his deaths wound about him (as we ſay) he is ſtricken already in his ſide with a deadly dart; without the healing mercy of God, there is but a ſtep betwixt him and eternall death; wherefore no man is to be envied for his ſinfull greatneſſe.

Vſe 2.

Againe, if this be ſo; that ſinne is a diſeaſe and wound of the ſoule, let us therefore labour to cure it preſently. It is deſperate folly in men to neglect their bodies, when they know that they are prone to ſuch and ſuch diſeaſes which are growing upon them every day: how carefull are men (perceiving this much) to prevent diſeaſes by timely phyſick? all ſinnes are diſeaſes, and growing like diſeaſes run from ill to

worſe

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worſe and worſe. *Wicked men* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *grow worſe and worſe.* Therefore, if ſin be a diſeaſe, prevent it preſently; for as wee ſee, Hereticks and other the like are hardly found, but at the firſt: and then are hardly cured: ſo, if we neglect the diſeaſes of our ſoules, they will breed a conſumption of grace, or ſuch an ill temper of ſoule, as that it cannot well deſire to repent. Nay when a man lives in wicked rebellious courſes long, God will give him up to ſuch terrors of conſcience, that it will not be pacified, but upbraid it ſelfe, I have been a ſinnefull wretched creature, mercy hath beene offered me againe and againe, but now it is too late, having out-ſtood all the meanes of grace, and rejected them. When they have conſidered that their lives have for a long time beene a meere rebellion, and that they have put off the checks of conſcience, the admonitions of the Word and Spirit, with the motions thereof: it is long in this caſe before a man can have peace; for anſwerable to the continuance in ſin, is the hardneſſe of the cure, if it be cured at all. 2 Tim. 3. 13.

Therefore there is no dallying with ſinne, I ſhall repent at length, but not now; yet a while I will continue theſe and theſe courſes, I ſhall doe well enough, *&c.* as if a man who were ſicke or deſperately wounded, ſhould ſay, I ſhall doe well, and yet neglect to ſend for the Phyſitian. None are ſo deſperately fooliſh in caſe of the body, why ſhould wee for our ſoules? is not that in much more hazard then the body, *That there is no dallying with ſin, to delay repentance.*

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That want of conviction of the sinfulnesse of sinne, makes us so sinnefull and careless.

if wee had spirituall eyes to consider of it? The truth is, people are not convinced of this; that sin is such a sicknesse, which is the reason they are so careless of it. But when the conscience is awaked, as it will be one day, heere or in Hell; then they will be of another minde. Nay, in this world, when friends, nor riches, nor any thing can comfort: then they cry out: O that they had not been so foolish, they would give a world (if they had it) for peace of conscience, this will be the best of it, for men that go on in sin. Therfore, before hardnesse of heart grow upon us (that disease following the disease of sinne) let us take heed, and labour to have our soules healed in time. Thus we have found, *That sinne is a sicknesse*: for so much is implied, when he saith: *I will heale their backesliding*. Whence the direct Observation is,

Observe. *That God is the great Physitian of the Soule.*

For he saith here, *I will heale their backsliding*, so that *healing* implies, the taking away of

1. *The Guilt of sinne*, which is the *venome* of it: by *Justification*.

2. *The Rage of sin*, which is the *spreading* of it; by *Sanctification*.

3. *The Removing the judgement upon our estate*.

For (unlesse God be the more mercifull) these things follow, where there is sinne, and breaking of his law, there is a state binding over to damnation and guilt: when there is a sinnefull disposition raging, and bringing us from one degree

degree of sinne to another, then there is Gods judgement and wrath revealed from Heaven against this. Now when God heales, he heales perfectly, but in some regards slowly, as wee shall see hereafter. In regard of *Forgivenesse of sinnes*, he healeth perfectly; but by little and little, in regard of the other of Sanctification, he stops up the issues of our corruption by little and little. For other things, and judgements in this world, he remooves the malice, and takes away the sting of them, which is the venome; as he saith afterwards, *For mine Anger is turned away*, which being remooved and turned from things, then they are no more judgements. What cared *Paul* for imprisonment, when hee knew Gods wrath accompanied not the stocks? let wrath be taken from the suffering; that the soule be sound, then it is no matter what condition a man be in, he carries Heaven and Paradice with him. Therefore, so farre God remooves those diseases and sicknesses of condition, as they carrie venome in them: so changing the condition, that whatsoever we suffer, it hath the nature of an exercise, medicine, or correction onely. But that which invenomes all, and makes the least crosse a curse, and sinkes deepe, is the anger of God joyned with things. The least crosse when it carrieth with it the anger and vengeance of God, and reports that to the soule; I have offended God, and it is just with him thus to inflict wrath upon me: this is terrible, and it puts a sting to the crosse. Now

Acts 16.

Psal. 89. 46.

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God here promiſeth to remoove that, *I will heale their backeſliding*; This principally in the firſt place is meant of healing in regard of *Iuſtification*; taking away that guilt from the ſoule, which inthralls it, and binds it over to condemnation and judgement. God will ſet the ſoule at a ſpirituall liberty and ſo heale it. Thus you ſee the point cleere, *That God is the great Phyſitian of the ſoule.*

Reaſon 1. For, God who made the ſoule, knowes all the diſeaſes, windings and turnings of it; he is an excellent Anatomiſt, *all things are naked and*

Heb. 4. 13. *open before his eyes*, he knowes the inward part of the ſoule, the ſeate of all ſinne. We know not our ſelves as he knowes us; there is a miſtery of ſelfe-deceit in the heart which he knowes, who can ſearch all the hidden corners of the heart; which is the Reaſon why he is ſo good a Phyſitian and ſo excellent, becauſe he is a diſcerner and ſearcher of the heart, who can ſee all, and ſo can cure all, being above the ſting of conſcience, he hath a remedy above the malady, he is greater then our conſcience, therefore hee can cure our conſcience.

Reaſon 2. And in the next place, *as hee can heale our ſoules, ſo hee is willing to doe it*: which his willingneſſe we may know by the medicine hee doth it by, his owne deare Sonne; hee hath provided a plaiſter of his Sonnes blood to heale us. And beſides his owne inward willingneſſe, being now a gratious Father to us in Chriſt Je-

1 Cor. 5. 20. ſus; hee ſends his Ambaſſadors to heale and

cure

cure us in his Name, to apply his medicines, and to beſeech and intreate us to be reconciled, God by them intreats us to intreat him for pardon and mercy, and is ſo willing to be intreated, that ere we ſhall ſet out; hee teacheth us words (as we heard) *Take unto you words, &c.* as he is an able, ſo hee is a willing Phyſitian. Chriſt the great Phyſitian together with his Father expects not that we ſhould firſt come to him, but he comes firſt, and ſends to us. The Phyſitian came to the ſick, though for the moſt part the ſicke (if able) goe to the Phyſitian. But here is the contrary, hee came from Heaven, tooke our nature upon him, and therein died, by which his blood-ſhedding he ſatisfied the wrath of God, juſtly offended with us. So he heales our ſoules that way, having undergone the anger and wrath of God, that his blood might quench and appeaſe that anger, by a plaiſter thereof made and applied to our ſoules.

1 Ioh. 4. 9, 10.

Iſa. 53. 10.

Iſa. 53. 11, 12.

Doe we doubt of his willingneſſe, when hee comes to us and calls us, *Come unto me all yee that labour and are heavie laden, and I will give you reſt.* It is his Office which hee hath aſſumed to heale our ſoule. The many cures he hath done, ſheweth the ability and willingneſſe of the Phyſitian, cures whereof we are uncapable of, by reaſon of our meane condition. A King as his place is greater, ſo ſometimes his ſinnes are greater then others are: yet hee cured *Manaſſeth* that ſinnefull King, together with *Mary Magdalen, Paul, Peter*, and the reſt, who were a company

Gods willingneſſe to ſave us. Mat. 11, 28.

2 King. 33. 12.

pany healed by this Phyſitian. Therefore all this is for the glory of our Phyſitian, we may ſee what he can doe, by what he hath done: as amongſt us, Phyſitians are ſought after, according to their skill and cures done. Conſider in the Sacrament how ready God is to cure and to heale us, how gratious he is in the Sacrament
Pſal. 119.49. of Baptiſme, wherein he ingageth us to beleeve, admitting us into the Covenant, and prevening us with mercy, before we knew what a Covenant or Seale was. And ſo to perſwade us of his willingneſſe to forgive our ſinnes and heale our Rebellions, hee hath ordained the Sacrament not for his ſake, but to ſtrengthen our weake faith, and help us. The point is eaſie for matter of our underſtanding, but hard in regard of uſe and Application: eſpecially when it ſhould be made uſe of, in time of temptation, then let us lay it up as a comfortable point, this gratious Promiſe of God, *I will heale their backſliding, I will love them freely, &c.* Lay this up againſt the houre of temptation, make uſe of it then, alleadging unto God his owne Promiſe
Ezek 16.6. and nature: as *David* did, *Lord, remember the Promiſe wherein thou haſt cauſed me to truſt.* Thou haſt promiſed *pardoning* and *healing* all our tranſgreſſions, *&c.* Remember thy free Promiſes made in Jeſus Chriſt. God cannot denie himſelfe nor his Word, but loves to have his bonds ſued: remember this.

And when conſcience is ſurprized with any ſinne (though it be never ſo great) looke not

on

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on the disease so much, as who is the Physitian, and what his plaister and medicine is? God is the Physitian, and the blood of Christ is the Plaister. What if our sinnes be *mountaines*, there is an Ocean and a sea of mercy to swell above and *cover these mountaines* of our sinnes. Our sinnes in this case are like fire, which falling into the sea, is by and by quenched. What if our sinnes be of never so long standing (as these their backesslidings heere, had continued hundreds of yeeres, wherein they were a backesliding generation) yet, it is no matter of what standing or continuance the disease is, so long as God hath promised to be the Physitian, and the blood of Christ is the Plaister that healeth us. The Question is not, what, how many, how great, and of what continuance our sinnes are: but how wee stand affected towards them, hate them, and resolve against them. That sinne cannot hurt us which wee fight against, mourne for, complaine of, resolve to leave, and truely hate. Let us never stand then in comparisons with our sinnes, which beare no proportion to the infinite skill and power of our great Physitian: and to the infinite worke of Christs all-sufficient satisfaction. What canst thou object O man? *It is Christ that justifieth the ungodly, who art thou that condemnest? It is he that died, yea rather who is risen againe, who is also at the right hand of God, and also maketh intercession for us.* Thou canst not satisfie for the least sinne: God hath laid upon him the iniquities of

Mic. 7. 18, 19.

Isa. 1. 18, 19.

Rom. 8. 33, 34.

Levit. 16. 22. Isa. 53. 5.

of us all. *The chastisements of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.*

Let us therefore be wise for afterwards, heare, reade, lay up, and meditate for the time to come, for times will come (if wee belong to God) that nothing will content or pacifie the soule, but the infinite worth and merit of an infinite and free mercy apprehended in the face of Jesus Christ. When our sins are set in order before us, the sinnes of our youth, middle, and old age, our sinnes against conscience, against the Law and Gospell, against examples, vowes, Promises, Resolution, and admonitions of the Spirit and servants of God. When there shall be such a terrible accuser, and God shall perhaps let the wounds of conscience fly open and joyne against us; when wrath shall appeare, be in some sort felt, and God presented to the soule, as *a consuming fire*, no comfort in heaven or earth appearing, hell beneath seeming ready to revenge against us the quarrell of Gods Covenant. O then for faith to looke through all these clouds, to see mercy in wrath, love in correction, life in death; the sweetnesse of the promises, the vertue and merit of Christs sufferings, death, resurrection, and intercession at the right hand; The sting of death removed, sinne pardoned and done away, and glory at hand; In summe this promise made good, which leads unto all this happinesse (as wee shall by and by heare) *I will heale their backesliding, I will love them freely,*

Heb. 12. 29.

Heb. 12. 6.

1 Cor. 15. 55.

ly, for mine anger is turned away. O this is a marvellous matter then to be perſwaded of. Therfore let us make a right uſe of theſe words in due ſeaſon. For they are, *like apples of gold with pictures of ſilver*, like balme to a greene wound, like delivery in a ſhipwracke: but indeed all compariſons come farre ſhort of this illuſtration, as the terrour of incenſed wrath in the fearefull apprehenſion of eternall unſpeakeable miſery is beyond any other feare, apprehenſion, or joy. Pro. 25. 11.

But leaſt this grace be abuſed by others (for wee muſt not with-hold the childrens bread, for feare others partake with them unto whom it belongs not) let them know this much, that thoſe who turne this grace into wantonneſſe, and will be evill, becauſe God is thus gracious; that there is no word of comfort in the whole Scripture for them, who ſtand reſolved to goe on in their ſinnes, preſuming of mercy. See what God ſaith in this caſe. *Leaſt there ſhould be among you a roote that beareth gall and worme-wood: and it come to paſſe when hee heareth the words of this curſe that hee bleſſe himſelfe in his heart, ſaying, I ſhall have peace, though I walke in the imagination of mine heart, to adde drunkenneſſe to thirſt; The Lord will not ſpare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealouſie, ſhall ſmoake againſt that man, and all the curſes that are written in this booke ſhall lie upon him, and the Lord ſhall blot out his name from under Heaven.* God will wound the hairy ſcalpe of ſuch an one, who Deut. 29. 18, 19, 20. Pſal. 68. 21.

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who goes on in his wickedneſſe, and meanes to be ſo. And in the *New Teſtament*, thoſe who thus make a progreſſe in ſin, what do they? They are ſaid *to treaſure up unto themſelves wrath againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgement of God.* Therefore Gods Word ſpeakes no comfort to thoſe who purpoſe to live in any ſin. Al the comfort that can be ſpoken to ſuch is, That yet they are not in hell, that yet they have time to returne to this great Phyſitian of the ſoule. But take ſuch an one in his preſent condition, he can have no comfort in this eſtate, wherein there is but a ſtep betweene him and hell; So as when the rotten thred of this uncertaine life ſhall faile, or is cut aſunder, downe they fall. We have no comfort heere for them, till they returne; This pretious balme belongs to the wounded conſcience. Briefly for uſe then.

Rom. 2. 5.

Vſe.

Seeing that our God is a healing God, as wee can admire the wiſdome, skill, and excellencie of our Phyſitian, ſo let us much more make uſe of him, upon all occaſions; Truſt and cleave to him, not like good *Aſa* (but not good in this) who forgot himſelfe, and ſent firſt to the Phyſitians. But let us eſpecially rely upon God and looke to him, who can *create helpe*, and muſt bleſſe all meanes whatſoever. Hee is *a healing God*, who will heale all rebellions, and the moſt grievous ſickneſſes; he is a Phyſitian that is good for all turnes. There are ſome diſeaſes which are called the ſcorne of Phyſitians, as

2 Chro. 16. 12

Iſa. 4. 5.

as the *Gowt*, the *Ague*, and the like, wherein in ſome caſes, they are put to a ſtand and know not what to doe; but God is never at a loſſe, his skill cannot be ſet downe, he is good at all diſeaſes; to pardon all manner of ſins. Therefore, let us goe to him for cure, ſeeing there is neither ſione, nor griefe, nor terror of conſcience ariſing thereupon which can be ſo great, but God can cure both the ſin and the terror, (if we take a right courſe) and ſpeake peace to the ſoule. God is a healing God, ariſing when he comes, *with healing in his wings*. As he ſaith, *I will heale their rebellion, &c.* And as hee is a healing Phyſitian, ſo he puts his patients to no charge; for as he ſaith, *I will heale their backeſliding*, ſo he ſaith, *I will love them freely*. Mal 4.2.

That free mercy is the ſcope of God in the new Covenant.

Therefore let us the more build upon this truth, which is indeed the ſumme of all Godlineſſe; For what is the Goſpell, but the triumph of mercy? doe but conſider the ſcope of God in the new Covenant, whereof the Sacraments is a ſeale: which is onely to ſhew forth the exaltation of the Grace and Mercy of God in Jeſus Chriſt, above all unworthineſſe whatſoever. For all there, is for the glory of his Mercy. For in the Covenant of grace, mercy doth triumph againſt judgement and juſtice, which mercy of God in Chriſt is ſaid by the Apoſtle, *to raigne unto life everlaſting by Ieſus Chriſt our Lord.* It reignes, and hath a regiment above, and over all. For mercy in God ſtirred up his Wiſedome to deviſe a Rom 5.21.

way

way by shedding of the blood of Christ Jesus God-man, to satisfie divine Justice, and rejoyce against it. But whence comes this that justice should be so satisfied; because a way is found out how none of Gods Attributes are loosers by mercy. Wherefore in any temptation when we are prone to doubt of Gods love; say, what shall we wrong God more by calling in question his mercy, and the excellency of his loving kindnesse, which is more then any other sinne we have committed? This is a sin superadded against his Mercy, Power, Goodnesse, Gratiousnesse and Love in healing of sinne: which takes away the glory of God in that Attribute, wherein he labours to triumph, raigne, and glorifie himselfe most, and *which is over all his workes.* Therefore hee that offends herein, in denying God the glory of his great, tender unspeakeable mercy, whereby he would glorifie himselfe most in the Covenant of grace, he offends God most.

That the greatest sin which is pardonable is to denie God the glory of his mercy.

Psal. 145. 9.

That we honour God most of all by giving him the glory of his mercy.

Therefore, let us at such times as God awakens conscience, be so farre from thinking that God is unwilling to cure and helpe us, as to thinke that hereby we shall Honour God more by beleeving, then we dishonoured him by our sinne. For the faith of an humble contrite sinner it glorifies God more then our better obedience in other things doth: because it gives him the glory of that wherein he delights, and will be most glorified: *the glory of his mercy and truth,* of his rich abundant mercy that hath no

bounds.

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bounds. There is no comparison betweene the mercy of God in the Covenant of grace, and that to *Adam* in the state of nature: for in the first he did good to a good man, first he made him good, and then did him good: but when man did degenerate, and was fallen into such a cursed estate as we are, for God then to be good to a sinner, and freely to doe good, here is goodnesse indeed, triumphant goodnesse. *Caine* was a cursed person, who said, *my punishment is greater then can be borne*, wee know who spake it; no, God is a Physitian for all diseases, if they be *crimson sinnes*, hee can make them *white as wooll*.

Gen. 4.13.

Isa. 1.18.

Who would not be carefull therefore to search his wounds, his sinnes to the bottome? let the search be as deepe as we can, considering that there is more *mercy* in God, then there can be *sinne* in us. Who would favour his soule, especially considering, if he neglect searching of it, sinnes will grow deadly and incurable upon that neglect. Let this therefore incourage us not to spare our selves, in opening the wounds of our soules to God; that he may spare all. Thus we saw formerly, The Church here is brought in dealing plainely with God and confessing all (for she had an excellent Teacher) and God answers all; beginning with this, *I will heale their backesliding*. They were Idolaters, and guilty of the sinnes of the second Table in a high measure (no petite sinnes) yet God saith, *I will heale their backesliding, &c.*

An incouragement to search our sins deeply.

Sect. V.

Which being healed, then an open high-way is made for all other mercies whatsoever, which is the next point we Observe hence;

Observ. *That the chiefe mercy of all, which leades unto all the rest, is the pardon and forgivenesse of sins.*

Healing of the guilt of sinne we see is set in the front of these Petitions formerly shewed; which as it is the first thing in the Churches desire, *Take away all iniquity, &c.* So it is the first thing yeelded to in Gods Promise; *I will heale their backesliding, &c.* Pardon of sin, and cure of sinne, whereby the conscience ceaseth to be bound over to condemnation is the first and chiefest blessing of God, and is that for which the Church falls out in a triumph. Micah 7.18, 19, 20. *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage, because he delighteth in mercy? &c.* And this is that excellent and sweet conclusion of the new Covenant also, whereupon all the rest of those former foregoing mercies there are grounded: Ier. 31.34. *for, I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sinne no more.* Yea this is the effect of that grand Promise made to his Church after the returne of their captivity. Ier. 50.20. *In those dayes, and at that time saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none, and the sins of Iudah, and they shall not be found; for, I will pardon them whom I reserve.* The point is plaine, and cleere enough, it needs no following. The Reason is,

Be-

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Because it takes away the interposing cloud: God is gratious in himselfe, pardon of sinne removes the cloud betwixt Gods gratious face and the soule. Naturally God is a spring of mercy, but our sinnes stop the spring, but when sinne is pardoned, the stop is taken away, and the spring runs amaine. God is not merciful, as a flint yeelds fire by force, but as a spring whence water naturally issues.

Reason

Seeing forgivenesse of sinne unstops this spring, why doe we not feele this mercy?

Quest.

Surely, because some sin or other is upon the file uncancelled, perhaps unconfessed, or because we are stuft with Pride that we beleeve not, or are so troubled, or trouble our selves, that we apprehend not, or beleeve not the pardon of sinnes confessed and hated. But sure it is, *Forgivenesse of sinnes unstops the spring of mercy, and unvailes Gods gratious face in Jesus Christ unto us.* Sinne being not pardoned, this stops, as the Prophet speakes, *our iniquity* is that which keepes good things from us. Therfore the cheefe mercy is that which removes that which unstops the current of all mercy: *I will heale their backesliding, &c.* Looke as a condemned Prisoner in the Tower, let him have all contentment, as long as he is in the displeasure of the Prince, stands condemned, and the sentence unreversed, what true contentment can he have? none at all. So it is with a sinner, that hath not his pardon and *quietus est* from heaven: yeeld him all contentment which the world can

Answ.

Why we want the sense of the forgivenesse of sinne.

Serm. VI.

can affoord; all the satisfaction that can issue from the creature; yet, what is this to him, as long as he hath not mercy, and that his conscience is not pacified, because it is not cleansed and washed with the blood of Christ?

Ionah 1.4. Sinne is like *Ionas*, whilst he was in the ship there was nothing but tempest: like *Achan* in the Army, whilst he was not found out Gods judgement followed the campe. Sinne is that which troubleth all, therefore it must be taken away first, and therewith all evill is taken away: therefore, the first mercy is a forgiving, pardoning and quieting mercy. When the blood of Jesus Christ by the hand of faith is sprinkled upon the soule, God creating a hand of faith to sprinkle and shed it upon the soule; *Christ loved mee, and gave himselfe for mee*, then the soule saith, though my sinnes be great, yet the satisfaction of Christ is greater: God hath loved me, and gave his owne Sonne for mee, and I apply this to my selfe, as it is offered to me, and take the offer, this pacifieth the soule, as it is written, *The Bloud of CHRIST* Heb.9.14. *who through the eternall Spirit offered himselfe without spot to God*; is that *which purgeth our conscience from dead workes to serve the living God.* To a Repentant sinner, this *Bloud of sprinkling speakes better things then the bloud of Abell*: Heb.12.24. not as his blood cried for vengeance: but *mercy, mercy*. When the soule is thus pacified, there is the foundation of all other mercy whatsoever. The Order is this, when God is

recon-

reconciled all is reconciled, when God is at peace with us in the Forgivenesse of sins, then all is peaceable at home and abroad, conscience is in peace within, and all the creatures at peace without, all which with all that befalls us, have a command to doe us no hurt: as *David* gave charge to the people of *Absolom*. When God is reconciled, and at peace, all things are at peace with us; for is not he Lord of Hosts, who hath the command of all the creatures? therefore this grace of forgivenesse is the chiefe grace.

To shew it in one instance more; *David* was a King and a Prophet, a comely and a valorous person, but what esteemed he most? did he say, blessed is the man, who is a King or a Prophet, or a valiant Warriour, or hath Dominion, Obedience, or great possessions as I have? O no, *Blessed is the man whose sins are forgiven, and whose iniquities are covered.* You see wherein this holy man *David* sets and pitcheth happinesse? in the forgivenesse of sinnes: Blessed is such a man. Though he were a great King, he knew well enough, that if his sinnes were not pardoned and covered, he had beene a wretched man. Psal. 32. 1.

Therefore, this should teach us to desire of God continually the pardon of our sins, and we should make it the cheefe desire of our soules, that God would shine upon them in Jesus Christ, pardon and accept us in his beloved, they goe together. *Vse.* 1.

And blesse him for this above all other blessings, as it is, *Psal.* 103. 1, 3. *Blesse the Lord O my* *Vse.* 2.

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soule, and all that is within mee blesse his holy Name, &c. Why? *Who forgiveth all thy iniquities, and healeth all thy diseases.* We should blesse God most of all for this, that he hath devised a way by Christ to receive satisfaction for sin, to pardon it, and say unto our soules, *I am thy salvation:* this is the greatest favour of all.

Quest. But you aske, How shall I know, that God hath healed my soule in regard of the forgivenesse of sinnes?

Answ. The answer is, *if together with pardon of sinne, he heales sinne:* for God when he takes away the venome of a wound that indangers death, the deadly disease, he takes away also the swelling of the wound and glowing of it. When hee ceaseth to make it deadly, he heales the soule withall; and *subdues our iniquities*, as his Promise is. So there is together with pardoning mercy, curing mercy in regard of Sanctification. Where God is a Father to make us Sonnes, he is a Father to beget us anew: so where Christ comes by *Blood* to wash away our sinnes, hee comes by *Water* also and the *Holy Ghost*: where hee is a *Comforter* in the forgivenesse of sinnes, he is a *Sanctifier*: And the soule of a distressed sinner lookes to the one as well as the other. Aske the soule of any man who is truly humbled, what doe you chiefly desire? O, that God would pardon my sinnes: But is that all? No; That he would also heale my sinnes, and subdue my Rebellions: that I may not any longer be under the government and tyranny of my

How to know that God hath pardoned our sinnes.

1. *If with pardoning there be subduing.*

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my luſts; but under Gods gratious government, who will guide mee better then before. This we ſee to be the Order in the *Lords Prayer*; after we are taught to ſay, *Forgive us our treſpaſſes*, it followes, *And leade us not into temptation, but deliver us from evill*, which is for the time to come: So *David*, *Cleanſe mee from my ſecret ſinnes, and keepe me that preſumptuous ſins have not dominion over me, &c.* So that this is the deſire of an afflicted conſcience truly humbled; cuting as well as covering of ſinne. This is a ſure evidence that our ſins are pardoned.

Hoſ. 2. 7.

Mat. 6. 12, 13.

Pſal. 19. 12, 13

Then againe *when there is peace*, when the ſoule feeles this, it is a ſigne that God hath heal'd the ſoule: *For* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Ieſus Chriſt*, the Blood of Chriſt hath a pacifying power in forgiveneſſe of ſinnes. When *Ionas* was caſt out there was a calme: So when ſinne is caſt out and pardoned, there is a calme in the ſoule; which comes from the forgiveneſſe of ſinnes.

2. *By Peace.* Rom. 5. 1.

Againe, Healing is knowne by this, if wee have hearts willing to be ſearched, for then our will is cured, which in the ſtate of grace is more then our Obedience: when we would be better then we are, then certainely our will is not in league with corruptions. Now where the will is ſo much ſanctified, I reſolve to be better, I would be better, and I uſe all meanes, being glad when any joynes with me againſt my corruptions, I am glad of all ſuch advantages,

3. *When we are willing to be ſearched.*

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here is a good signe. As now, when a man goes to Church, and desires, O that my corruptions might be met withall, O that I might be laid open to my selfe, and know my selfe better then I have formerly done: this is the desire of an ingenuous soule. Where there is no guile of soule, a man is glad to have himselfe and his corruptions discovered, whereas another frets and kicks, and rageth against the Word of God, which is a signe that there is some league betwixt him and his sin. You have some, that above all things in the world, they would not have such and such downe-right Ministers: O take heed this is a signe of a hollow heart, and that a man is in love with his disease: can there be a cure where there is a love of the disease?

4. *By our estimation of heavenly and earthly things.* Coloss. 3. 1.

Not to name many, the last (which is a high pitch) shall be *by our estimation of things here and above:* What hath this healing wrought in thee? What estimation of things? How is thy heart weaned from the world? How are thy affections set on things which are above? When a sick man is soundly recovered, though his distempered pallate could not relish the best meates in his sickenesse, yet now he relishes and loves the best most of all. Looke then to our selves, how forget we with blessed S. *Paul, the things which are behind, pressing hard to the marke which is before, for the high price of that Calling?* Phil 3. 13. How stand we affected to long for our Country, this world being only the place of our pilgrimage? Surely a soule that is soundly healed, is an

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undervaluing soule, to use this world and all things therein as though we used them not: and it is also a valuing soule, to covet spirituall things above all. *O* (saith *David*) *how I love thy law, it is my meditation all the day. I love thy Commandements above gold, yea above fine gold.* The joy of this estate, *is a joy unspeakeable and glorious*: of which it is said, *the stranger shall not meddle with.* This much concerning the disease, before we come to the cure, a Question ariseth.

1 Cor. 3.19,20

Psal. 119. 72, 127.

1 Pet. 1.8. Pro. 14.10.

Quest. Whence then comes a calme in a carnall person?

Answ. From ignorance and deadnesse of conscience, or from diversion: as a sick man when he talkes with another man that is his friend, his minde is diverted that he feeleth not his sicknesse all the while; so wicked men, either their consciences are seared, and they goe on in sin, or else they have diversions. Great persons are loath to heare, and are usually full of diversions, from the time they rise, till they sleepe againe: all diversions busie conscience about other things, so they keepe themselves that it may not trouble them. But the peace of a true Christian comes from another ground; from sound knowledge of his disease, and from sound satisfaction, by faith knowing Christ; the Spirit of God sealing this knowledge to the soule: if peace be thus setled, it is a signe of a sound cure.

Quest. But you will say, How shall I know that my sins are pardoned, when I am subject to those sins still?

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Answ. *How to know pardon of sin, when corruption gives foyles still.*

Not to speake of transient actuall sinnes, that are past and pardoned when wee have repented of them: but of the roote of all sinne, which is weakenesse and corruption in us, fortified and (as it were) intrenched by nature, occasions and custome, of this the Question is; How to discerne of pardon, the roote of sinne remaining, and now and then foyling us? The Answer is Affirmative, we may have that sinne pardoned, which yet occasionally may foyle us still. For a man is in the state of health, though he have the dregs of a disease hanging upon him, whereby a man oftimes hath some little fit of the disease. When nature and physicke hath prevailed over the disease; yet after that, there may be grudgings. So when God hath cured the soule by pardon, and hath begun to cure in Sanctification, the cure is wrought, though some dregs remaine: because those dregs are carried away with daily physicke, and daily flying to God, *Lord forgive our debts, Lord heale us*: every prayer and renewing of Repentance carries some debt away, till death comes, that excellent Physitian, which once for all perfectly cures both soule and body bringing both there where both shall have Perfection.

Quest. But you will say, is Gods grace weake, that it cannot carry away all dregs of corruption, as well as pardon? Why is pardon in the forgivenesse of sins absolute, when yet God suffers the dregs to remaine, so as we still are subject to the disease of sin?

God

God is wise, let us not quarrell with our Physitian, for he is wiser then we our selves: for he makes these reliques medicinall to us: as thus, Naturally we are prone to security and spirituall pride, therefore he makes a medicine of our infirmities, to cure spirituall pride and security, and to set us a worke. Therefore the *Iebusites* and the residue of that kinde, were left uncast out from among Israel, that thereby he might proove Israel, and least they should be a prey unto wilde beasts to devoure them. So some remainders of the flesh are left still in the best, that these wilde beasts might not prey upon their soules, spirituall pride, which is a detestable sinne, robbing and denying God of his Prerogative, and security, the grave of the soule: to cure these two especially, God makes the reliques and remainders of sinne a medicine unto us.

Judg. 3. 1.

Quest. Why doth God suffer these infirmities and diseases to remaine in us?

Answ. Diseases are suffered to put us in minde of infirmities in the roote, which we knew not before; for if these should not sometimes breake forth into a disease, we would thinke our nature were pure: therfore God suffers them to breake forth into diseases. Who would have thought that *Moses* had beene passionate? certainely himselfe did not know himselfe at the waters of strife: that the seeds of anger should be in the meekest man in the world? who would have thought that *Dauid* whose heart smote him for curting off the lap of *Sauls* garment, that so milde

Answ. *Why God suffers diseases and infirmities to remaine in us.*

Num. 20. 12.

1 Sam. 24. 5.

milde a man should have cruelty in him? and yet after that, he committed murther. Who would have thought that *Peter*, who made such protestations of love to Christ, that though all men forsooke him, yet he would not, yet after that should denie his Master, and forswear him? all which was to shew us, that it is usefull for us sometimes to have our corruptions breake out, to put us in minde what inward weaknesses wee have unknowne and unsearched in us, and that wee may know the depth of our corruption. Gods children are gainers by all their infirmities and weaknesses, whereby they learne to stand stronger. Heere is a maine difference betwixt the slips of Gods children, and the ordinarie evill courses of others: they grow worse and worse, the oftner they fall into sin, the more they are setled upon their dregs. But Gods child hath the remainders of corruption in him, from whence he hath infirmities, and whence hee breaks into diseases: but notwithstanding, corruption is a looser hereby; for the ofter he falls into sinne, it is the weaker and weaker: for the more he sees the roote of it, the more he hates it, resolves and strives against it, till it be consummated by Repentance and Sanctifying grace. Let no man therefore be too much cast downe for infirmities, though oftimes they breake out, if thereupon we finde a renewed hatred, Repentance and strength against them: for God looks not so much how much corruption there is in us, as how we stand affected to it, and what good there

Mat. 26 33, 69, &c.

That Gods children are gainers by their afflictions and weaknesses.

In what case we may be comforted, though infirmities breake out.

there is: whether we be in league with it, and resist it. It is not sinne that damnes men, but sin with the ill qualities: sin unconfessed, not grieved for, and unresisted, else God hath holy ends in leaving corruption in us, to exercise, trie us, and keepe us from other sins, Therefore sin is left uncured.

The way to have sinne cured both in heaven and in sense of conscience by Sanctification.

Now the way to have it cured, both in the Pardon, and likewise in *Sanctification*, we have it in the Context; what doth God say? *I will heale their backsliding, &c.* after they had searched their hearts, and thereupon found iniquity; and then prayed, *Take away all iniquity*, after they had desired a divorse from their sinnes, *Assur shall not save us*: and when they had some faith that God would cure them, and accordingly put confidence in God, *the Father of the Fatherlesse*. Then saith God, *I will heale their backsliding*, so that sense of pardon in the forgivenesse of sins, and sense of grace, comes after sight, sense, wearinesse and confession of sinne. God doth not pardon sinne, when it is not seene, sorrowed for, nor confessed, and where there is not some degree of faith, to come to God *the Father of the Fatherlesse*, and the great Physitian of soules. When we doe this, as it is said in the Context, then wee find the forgivenesse of sinnes, with the gratious power of Gods Spirit healing of our diseases. *I will heale their backsliding.*

Let us therefore remember this, least we deceive our soules; for it is not so easie a thing to attaine

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That though forgivenesse of sinnes be freely given: yet the preparing way thereunto costs us deare.

attaine unto forgivenesse of sinnes as we thinke.

And then againe, though forgivenesse of sins be free, yet notwithstanding there is a way whereby we come to forgivenesse of sins, that costs us somewhat; God humbles the soule first, brings a man to himselfe, to thinke of his course, to lay open his sinnes and spread them before God in confession, and working upon the soule hearty Repentance, so to come to God, and waite for forgivenesse of sins, perhaps a good while before there be a report of it. There are none who have sins forgiven, but they know how they come by it: for there is a predisposition wrought in a mans soule by the Spirit which reacheth him, what estate he is in, and what his danger is, whereupon followes confession, and upon that peace. God keepes his children many times along while upon the racke before he speakes peace unto them in the forgivenesse of sins, because he would not have them thinke sleightly of the riches of his mercy. It is no easie matter to attaine unto the sense of the forgivenesse of sinnes, though indeed we should strive to attaine it, that so we may walke in the comforts of the Holy Ghost. The difficulty of obtaining or recovering the sense of forgivenesse, may be seene in *David*, after his fall did he easily obtaine sense of pardon? O no, God held him on the racke a long time, *He roared all the day long, his moisture was turned into the drought of Summer.* But when he had resolved a thorough and no sleight confession; when hee had resolved to shame himselfe, and glorifie

Psal 32.3,4.

God;

God; then saith he, *And thou forgavest my sinne*, but till he dealt thoroughly with his soule without all guile, he felt no comfort. So it is with the children of God, when in the state of grace they fall into sin; it is no sleight, *Lord have mercy upon me*, that will serve the turne; but a thorough shaming of themselves before God, and a thorough confession, resolving and determining to be under another government; to have Christ to governe them, as well as to pardon them: God will no otherwise do it. Because he would glorifie his rich mercy herein: for who would give mercy its due glory, if forgivenesse were easily attained without shaming of our selves? If it came easily without protestation and waiting upon God, (as the Church heere) we should never be thoroughly humbled for our sinnes, and God would never have the glory of his mercy; nor knowne to be so just in hating of sinne in his deare children, who long ago upon such termes have attained sense of forgivenesse of sins. It is worth our trouble to search our soules, and to waite at Christs feete, never to give over untill we have attained the sense of forgivenesse of sin. It is heaven upon earth to have our consciences inlarged with Gods favour in the pardon of sin.

Why the soule must waite and be humbled before the sense of the forgivenesse of sinnes.

What is the Reason that many professe, that God is mercifull, and Christ hath pardoned their sins, *&c.* if the ground be right, it is a high conceit of *mercy*: and such have beene soundly humbled for their sins. But dost thou professe so who livest carelesly in thy sins and licentiously still;

That there can be no sense of pardon, where Humiliation and Reformation is wanting.

still; surely thy ground is naught, for hadst thou beene upon the racke, in Gods scalding-house and smarted soundly for sin; wouldest thou take pleasure still to live in sinne? O no. Those that goe on carelesly in their actions and speeches not caring what they are, did they ever smart for sin who carrie themselves thus? Surely these were never soundly humbled for sinne, nor confessed them with loathing and detestation. Therefore let us marke the Context heere inferred, after they had confessed, praied and waited, resolving Reformation in their false confidence: then God promiseth, *I will heale their backesliding*. It is a fundamentall error in a Christian course, the sleighting of true humiliation, which goes along in all the Fabrick and frame of a Christian course. Let a man not be soundly humbled with the sight of his sinnes, his faith is weaker, and his Sanctification and comfort the sleighter. Whereas if a man would deale truly with his owne heart, set up a Court there, and arraigne, judge, and condemne himselfe (which is Gods end in all his dealings, afflictions, and judgements inflicted upon us) the deeper wee went in this course, the more would our comfort be and the report of Gods mercy, in the sense of that which followes: *I will love them freely, for mine Anger is turned away.*

The end of the fifth Sermon.

THE

THE SIXTH SERMON.

Hos. 14. 4,5.

—I will love them freely, for mine Anger is turned away.

I will be as the Dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the Lillie, and cast forth his Roote as Lebanon.

IT was a good ſpeech of S. *Auſtin*, thoſe that are to petition great perſons, they will obtaine ſome who are skilfull to frame their Petitions, leaſt by their unskillfullneſſe they provoke Anger inſteed of carrying away the benefit deſired. So it is here with Gods people being to deale with the great God, and not be-

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ing able to frame their owne petitions, God (as we heard before) doth it for them: and anſwers them graciouſly with the ſame mercies which he had ſuggeſted them to aske; his anſwer being exact to their petitions, *I will heale their backſliding, I will love them freely, &c.* wherein God exceeds all Phyſitians in the world whatſoever, for they have nature to helpe them. *Phyſick is the mid-wife of Nature,* helping it to do that which it cannot doe of it ſelfe: Phyſick can do nothing to a dead man; but God is ſo great a Phyſitian, that he firſt gives life, and after that ſpirituall Life is in ſome degrees begun, by little and little he heales more and more. *I will heale their backſlidings.*

We have an error crept in amongſt ſome of the meaner ignorant ſort of people, who thinke that God ſees no ſinne, when he hath once pardoned men in Juſtification, who falſely ſmooth themſelves in this wicked ſenſuall conceit, thinke they can commit no ſinne offenſive to God; as though God ſhould frame ſuch a Juſtification for men, to blindfold him and caſt duſt (as it were) in his eyes: or juſtifie men to make them looſe and idle. No, it is falſe, as appeareth by this place; for how can God heale that he ſees not? He ſees it not to be revenged on them for it, but hee ſees ſinne, to correct it and to heale it. He ſees it not after a revengefull wrathfull juſtice to caſt us into Hell and damne us for it; but he ſees it after a ſort to make us mourn and lament for it, and to have many times

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a bitter sense of his wrath and forsaking, as men undone without a new supply of comfort and peace from Heaven. Let a man neglect Sanctification, daily sorrow and confession of sinne, and now and then even craving new pardon for sinnes past, casting all upon a fantasticke conceit of faith in their justification: what followes, but Pride, Hardnesse of heart, Contempt of others and neglect of better then themselves, and pronenesse, out of Gods judgement, to fall from ill to worse, from one error to another? In this case the heart is false and deceitfull, for whilst it pretends a glorious faith to looke back to Christ, to live by faith, and lay all on him by justification; it windes it selfe out of all rules of Religion, sets the heart at liberty, neglects Sanctification and Mortification of lusts, and beautifying the image of God in them, giving too much way to the flesh. Therefore away with this false and selfe-conceited opinion: which drawes poyson out of that which God speakes to confirme and stablish us, *That he sees no iniquity in Iacob, &c.* Whence from these Hyperbolicall speeches, they thinke that God seeth not that which we our selves see, *But, hee heales our backslidings*, therefore hee sees them, for how can he heale a wound, if he see it not? He sees it, but not to their destruction who are freely justified by his grace. But we will leave this point, it being too much honour to them to spend time in confutation of it and will rather say unto it, as *Isaiah* speakes of a menstruous cloth, *get thee hence.* Isa. 30 22.

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Now as God is a moſt gratious God, never weary of well doing and comforting his people, becauſe it is his nature to be mercifull: So hee hath ſuteable expreſſions of it, hee goes on with mercy upon mercy, loving kindneſſe upon loving kindneſſe. Hee had promiſed before: *I will heale their Backeſlidings*, take in ſumme all their Apoſtacie, all ſhall be healed. But this is not all, hee anſwers all the accuſations and doubts of Satan: who is ſtill objecting againſt us our unworthineſſe, miſery, wretchedneſſe to have ſuch favours conferred on ſuch filthy creatures: Therefore, hee takes of all with this which followeth, as they had prayed, *Receive us gratiouſly*; So the anſwer is full, and ſuitable to their requeſt.

I will love them freely.

Put caſe, they out of conſcience of their owne guilt ſhould ſee no worth in themſelves or cauſe why they ſhould be reſpected: yet I ſee reaſon in mine owne love.

I will love them freely.

Queſt. But may ſome ſay, How can God love freely?

Anſw. Aske thy ſelfe, doth not a father and a mother love their child freely? what doth the child deſerve of the father and mother a great while? Nothing, but the mother hath many a weary night, and foule hand with it. Hath God planted an affection in us to love our children freely, and ſhall not God much more who gives this love and plants it in us, be admitted to love freely. But indeed there is abſurdity

furdity and infidelity in distrust. For it is against reason to deny the mighty God that which wee have in our selves. If hee did not love freely, how could hee love us at all? what could he fore-see in us to love for before hand? the very manhood of Christ deserved not the grace of union, it was freely given.

I will love them freely.

That which first of al we observe hence is this much, *That God loves his people freely.* So *Rom.* 5. 8, 9. saith the Apostle, *God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us: much more being justified by his blood, wee shall be saved from wrath thorough him.* The like wee have in *Ezekiell*, saith God, Therefore, say unto the house of *Israel*, thus saith the Lord God, *I doe not this for your sakes O house of Israel, but for mine holy Names sake, which yee have profaned among the heathen whether yee went.* *Adam* when he had sinned that maine great sinne, what did hee? flie from God, run away, and when God called to him and debated the matter with him, he accused God, and excused himselfe. Yet for all this God pittied him, and cloathed him, and made him that promise of the blessed seed. What desert was there here in *Adam?* nay, rather the quite contrary: yet God *loved him freely.* The same may be said of S. *Paul* for the time past a persecuter, what deserving was there in him? none at all, yet hee found Gods free love in his conversion: for saith God to

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Ezek. 36. 22.

Gen. 3. 12, 13.

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Acts 9.15. *Ananias, He is a choſen veſſell unto mee, to beare my name before the Gentiles.* Here was no deſerving in S. *Paul*, but Gods free election which in time tooke place; and ſo we may ſay of the *Prodigall* having ſpent all, his Father pardoned all and loved him freely.

Acts 9.5.

Luke 15.20.

Reaſon 1. Exod. 34.6. The Reaſon hereof is. 1. *Becauſe it is his name and nature to be gratious*, and to love freely, and whatſoever is Gods nature, that hath a freedome in the working.

Reaſon 2. 2. *Becauſe no creature can deſerve any thing at Gods hands.* 1. Becauſe by nature we are all Gods enemies and therefore what can enemies deſerve? nothing but wrath and vengeance. 2. If we have any graces, they are the gift of God, and therefore we deſerve nothing by them, they being of his owne gift. So S. *Iames* ſpeakes, *Iam. 1.17.* *Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above and commeth downe from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableneſſe nor ſhadow of turning.* And S. *Paul* ſaith: *Rom. 11.36.* *That of him, and through him, and to him are all things:* what ſhould follow hereupon? *To whom be glory for ever.*

Vſe 1. This in the firſt place ſerves for reproofe of our adverſaries of the Romiſh Church: who ſay, that God loves us for ſomething foreſeene in us which is good: or for ſomewhat which in time wee would doe to deſerve favour at his hands: but both are falſe, the cauſe of love is free from himſelfe: for, *when we have done our beſt*, yet (ſaith the Holy Ghoſt) *we are unprofitable ſervants.* Luke 17.10.

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Secondly, it is for reproofe of Gods owne deare children, who becauſe they finde no deſerving in themſelves, are therefore diſcouraged at the ſight of their own unworthineſſe, whereas quite contrary, the ſight of our owne unworthineſſe, ſhould make us the more fit ſubjects for Chriſts free love: which hath nothing to doe with them that ſtand upon deſerving. Many of Gods deare children are troubled with temptations, doubts, and feares of Gods love and favour towards them, becauſe they expect to finde it in the fruits of *Grace*, and not in *free Grace* it ſelfe. If we would have any ſound peace, let us looke for it in *free Grace*. Therefore the bleſſed Apoſtle, in the entrance of his ſalutations in his Epiſtles, ſtill joyneth *Grace*, and then *Peace*, to ſhew us that if we looke for ſound *Peace*, we can no where finde it but in *Grace*. We would finde *Peace*, in the *Grace* that is in us; but it is labour in vaine, for we ſhall never finde it but in *free Grace*. *Vſe* 2.

Hence wee may alſo be comforted in the certainety of our ſalvation; for that grace and love and favour whereby wee are ſaved is in God, not in us. Now whatſoever is in him is immutable and ſure. So ſaith the Apoſtle, *Nevertheleſſe the foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeale, the Lord knoweth them that are his; and let every one that nameth the name of Chriſt, depart from iniquity.* Where ſpeaking of election which comes from the free love of God, hee makes that a ſure foundation to *Vſe* 3. 2 Tim. 2. 19.

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build on; if there be a reformation *to depart from iniquity*, wee may be comfortably aſſured of our ſalvation. And as it is with *Election*, ſo is it with all the other fruits of Gods love: *Vocation*, *Adoption*, *Juſtification*, and *Perſeverance*: the foundation of God faſtly ſealed in the way of holineſſe ſtands good and ſure in all.

Rom. 3. 24. Ioh. 13. 1.

Vſe. 4. This further teacheth us, Thankfullneſſe unto God, who hath ſo freely loved us, for if there were deſerving on our part, what place were left for thankfullneſſe? We know one who deſerves nothing and hath ſmall matters beſtowed upon him, at leaſt will be thankfull for ſuch favours. But when one is ſo farre from deſerving any thing, that by the contrary hee deſerveth all plagues and puniſhments: hath yet many and abundant mercies beſtowed freely upon him, this doth exceedingly provoke (eſpecially a generous ſpirit) to a ſuitable thankfullneſſe, as much as may be.

Vſe 5. And let it likewiſe breed Confidence in us to God in all our miſeries, both for pardon of ſinne, helpe in diſtreſſe, and comfort in ſorrowes, becauſe he *loves us freely*, and did love us whilſt wee were enemies: make therefore upon all occaſions the Apoſtles uſe of it. *For if when we were enemies wee were reconciled to God by the death of his ſonne; much more being reconciled, we ſhall be ſaved by his life?*

Rom. 5. 10.

I will love them freely.

In the next place, from hence we obſerve a-

nother

nother point which neceſſarily followeth upon the former: *That God did not then begin to love them, when he ſaid I will love them freely: but to diſcover that love unto them, which hee carried unto them from all eternity.* For inſtance hereof S. *Paul* was beloved of God, ere God manifeſted his love unto him: as hee teſtifieth of himſelfe, that the diſcovery of this *free love* was, *when it pleaſed God who ſeparated me from my mothers wombe, and called mee by his Grace, to reveale his ſonne in mee, &c.* So *Epheſ.* 1. 3, 4. The Apoſtle bleſſeth God in his ſalutation unto them, *who had bleſſed them with all ſpirituall bleſſings in heavenly places in Chriſt.* But whence fetcheth hee the ground hereof? *According as hee hath choſen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we ſhould be holy and unblameable before him in love.* Wee need not multiply places more to prove it, our adverſaries would faine ſeeme to cleere God onely in all, and ſo ſhrowd their arguments under ſuch needleſſe pretences, ſhift of all places, name wee never ſo many with their ſtrong heads, diſtinctions, and ſophiſmes. But God will one day give them no thankes for their labour: the *will* of God (how unequall ſoever in our eyes, who cannot with our ſhallow conceits ſound the depth of ſuch miſteries) being ground enough to juſtifie all his actions whatſoever. We will therefore come to ſome Reaſons of the point.

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Obſerv.

Gal. 1. 15, 16.

Epheſ. 1. 4.

Becauſe, *What ſoever is in God* (manifeſted in time) *Reaſon* 1.

time) *is eternall and everlasting in him, without beginning and ending*, for whatsoever is in God, is God. God is not loving, but Love: and hee is not onely true, but Truth it selfe: hee is not wise onely, but *Wisedome* it selfe. And therefore his love discovered in time, must needs be from all eternity.

1 Iohn 4.8. Iohn 14.6.

2. Secondly, if God did then first begin to love us, when he manifested his love unto us, then there should be a change in God; because hee should *love* them now, that he did not formerly *love*. As wee see, those who loved *Paul* after his Conversion, loved him not before, there was then a change in the Church: in which case, if God should so love, he should be changeable, and so be like unto man.

3. And then againe Christs Prayer, *Iohn* 17. makes it cleere, that the love of God beginneth not with the manifestation thereof: for Christ there, knowing all the Fathers secrets (as comming out of the bosome of the Father) intimates the contrary: where he makes one end of his prayer for them to be, *That the world may know, that thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.* Now how hee loved Christ is also shewed a little after; *For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world*: Therefore the Saints and Children of God are loved with an everlasting former love, not beginning at that instant discovery thereof.

Iohn 17.23.

Iohn 17.24.

Vse. 1. The Use hereof, is, first of all, against those who measure Gods love and favour by their owne

owne feeling, because as God loved them before, so he loves them as well and as dearely still, when he hideth his face from them, as when he suffered his loving kindnesse to shine most comfortably upon them. He loved Christ as dearely when he hanged on the tree, in torment of soule and body, as he did, when he said, *This is my beloved sonne, in whom I am well pleased*, yea and when hee received him up into glory. The Sunne shineth as cleerely in the darkest day, as it doth in the brightest. The difference is not in the Sunne, but in some clouds which hinder the manifestation of the light thereof. So God loveth us as well, when he shineth not in the brightnesse of his countenance upon us, as when he doth. *Iob* was as much beloved of God in the middest of his miseries, as he was afterwards when he came to enjoy the abundance of his mercies. Mat. 3. 17. Iob 42. 7.

I will love them freely, &c.

The last Point which we gather from hence, as a speciall ground of comfort, is this: Observ.

That this free love and favour of God, is the cause of all other mercies and free favours, whereby he discovereth his love unto us.

1. It is the cause *of election*, even so then *at this present time also there is a remnant, according to the election of grace.* So 2. For *vocation*: which the Apostle had shewed that the *Ephesians* were saved by *Grace*; hee adds, that in the ages to come, hee might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, *in his kindnesse towards us through* Rom. 5. 11. Ephes. 5. 7.

Christ

Christ Iesus, hee afterwards sheweth, when this grace began first to have being. *For wee are his workemanship created unto good workes, which God hath before ordained that we should walke therein.* Ephes. 2. 10. 3. Forgivenesse of sinnes, *In whom we have a redemption through his blood, even the forgivenesse of sinnes, according to the riches of his grace.* Ephes. 1. 7. So 4. For the grace of Love: *Wee love him, because he loved us first.* 1 Ioh. 4. 19. 5. For Justification, and Sanctification. It is said, *that Christ hath loved us,* Rev. 1. 5. *and washed us from our sinnes in his owne blood*; and S. *Iohn* saith, *Hee hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father.* 1. Kings to fight against the world, the flesh, and the divell. 2. Priests, to teach, instruct, reprove, and comfort our selves and others by the Word of God: and then to offer up the sacrifice of a broken heart, in prayers and praises. All comes from freedome of love. 6. So every good Inclination comes hence. *For it is God which worketh in us, both to will and to doe of his good pleasure.* Hos. 5. 14. Phil. 1. 13. So 7. Every good Worke: *For we are his workemanship created in Christ Iesus unto good workes, which he had before ordained that we should walke therein: For by grace ye are saved* (saith he) *through faith.* Ephes. 2. 8, 10. So 8. For Eternall life: the Apostle sheweth: *It is the gift of God, through Iesus Christ our Lord.* Rom. 6. 23.

This should teach us in the first place to be humbled, in that we are so miserable naughty servants, doing so little worke, nay nothing as we should, yet should have so good wages: *but*

God

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God loves us freely, &c. It should rather humble us the more, then puffe us up in pride, in regard that there was nothing in us which might deserve any thing at Gods hand. 1 Cor 4 7. Ephes 2.9.

And hence also it followeth infallibly; that if he loved us from everlasting with a free love, in a sort, as he loved Christ, that therefore the effects of his love towards us shall never faile; as the Apostle sheweth, *The gifts and calling of God, are without Repentance.* Faith and Repentance being fruits of his love wrought in us, shall hold out: therfore the weakenesse of these graces as they shall not hinder our salvation; no more should they discourage us, or hinder the comfort of our profession. Because that Faith and Repentance which wee have, is not any worke of ours, but the worke of Gods free love in us: therefore they shall be continued, and accepted. For our *Perseverance* doth not stand in this, that wee have strength in our selves to continue faithfull to God, but because he out of his free love, continueth faithfull to us; and will never faile, nor forsake them whom he hath once taken into his everlasting favour, on whom hee hath set his everlasting free love, as the Apostle speakes of Christ. *Who also shall confirme you unto the end, that yee may be blamelesse in the day of our Lord Iesus Christ:* but upon what ground? *God is faithfull by whom wee were called unto the fellowship of his Sonne Iesus Christ our Lord.* So that if any of the Elect should fall away, God

Vse 2. Ioh. 17. 23, 24

Rom, 11. 29.

1 Cor. 1. 8, 9.

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God should be unfaithfull. The case in *Perseverance* is not how faithfull wee are, but how faithfull God is, who *guides us heere with his Counsell in all things, and afterwards receiveth us into glory.* So in another place, after the Apostle had prayed, *Now the very God of Peace Sanctifie you wholy; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soule and body be preserved blamelesse unto the comming of our Lord Iesus Christ.* What maketh he the ground of this his Prayer? *Faithfull is hee that calleth you, who also will doe it.*

Psal. 73. 24.

1 Thess. 5. 23, 24.

Vse. 3. If then we would have God to manifest his free love to us, let us strive to be obedient to his Commandements, and stirre up our hearts by all meanes to love him, who hath so freely loved us.

Quest. Now how should wee manifest our love to God?

Answ. *How to manifest our love to God.* First, in loving his Word: as *Psal.* 19. & *Psal.* 119. Secondly, in loving his people, 1 *Ioh.* 5. 1, 2. Thirdly, in longing for, and loving his second comming, *Revel.* 22. 20.

Now followeth the Reason of the discovery of this free love shewed now in time to them.

For mine Anger is turned away from him.

Here is the third Branch of Gods answer to their Petition, *Mine Anger is turned away from him:* which is included and implied in the former, *I will heale their backesliding:* how could hee doe this if he were Angry? No, he saith, *I will love them freely:* which argues that his

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his anger was appeased. God knoweth that variety of words and expressions are all little enough to raise up and comfort a doubting, wounded, galled soule: which when it is touched with a sense of sin and of his displeasure, cannot heare words enough of comfort. This God knowes well enough, and therefore he adds expression upon expression: *I will heale their backsliding, I will love them freely, for mine Anger is turned away from him.* The soule which is touched with the sense of wrath and defiled with the staines of sinnes dreadfull impressions, receives all this cheerefully, and more too: therefore in such cases, we must take in good part the largenesse of Gods expressions. *For mine Anger is turned away from him.* To unfold the words therefore.

Anger of God what?

Anger is the inward displeasure which God hath against sin, and his purpose to punish it, accompanied with threatnings upon his purpose, and execution upon his threatnings. The point to be observed in the first place is,

Observ.

That there is Anger in God against sin.

We need not stand to proove the point it is so manifest to every man, the Scripture is copious in it; if wee consider either judgements executed upon sinners, threatnings against sin, or the Saints complaining of it, as *Psal.* 7. 11. *Iob* 42. 7. *Psal.* 6. 1. *Psal.* 90. 11. *Psal.* 38. 1, 3. *Isa.* 63. 6. with many the like places proove, *That there is Anger in God against sinne*; we will rather see the Reason of it.

Because

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Reason

Because there is an Antipathie betwixt him and sinne, which is contrary to his pure nature. Sinne as it opposeth God, so it is contrary unto him; and indeed, sin would turne him out of his soveraignty. For what doth a man when he sins wittingly and willingly, but turne God out of his governement, and causes the divell to take up Gods roome in the heart? when a man gives way to sinne, then the divell rules, and he thinkes his owne lusts better then Gods will, and his owne carnall reason in contriving of sinne above Gods wisedome in his Word: therefore he is a proud Rebell. Sinne is such a kinde of thing that it labours to take away God, for it not onely puts him out of that part of his throne, mans heart, but for the time a man sinnes, hee could wish there were no God to take vengeance of him. Can you wonder therfore that God is so opposite to that, which is so opposite to his Prerogative royall as sinne is?

The effects of Gods Anger against sin.

Psal. 14. 1.

The truth is, God is Angry with nothing else but with sinne, which is the onely object of his Anger. That which foolish persons make a trifle and sport of, Swearing, filthie speaking and lying, is the object of Gods Anger. For this offence of sinne, he did not spare the *Angels of Heaven,* but tumbled them thence, never to returne againe.

2 Pet. 2 4.

Sin also thrust *Adam* out of *Paradise,* and made God angry with him and the whole world, so as to destroy it with a flood of water; and will at last make him

Gen. 3. 23.

Gen. 6. 13. 2 Pet. 3. 12.

burne

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burne and consume up all with a deluge of fire. Yea, it made him in a sort angry with his owne deare Sonne, when he under-went the punishment of sinne, as our Surety: so that he cried out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* If God thus shewed his anger against sinne, in punishing it in Christ our Surety, who was made sinne for us, and yet had no sinne in himselfe: how will he punish it much more in those who are not in Christ: those who stand in their owne sinne and guilt, what will become of them? So that God is angry with sin and with nothing else. Mat. 27. 46.

The second thing we gather from this, where hee saith, *My anger is turned away from him*, Gods anger being taken especially for judgements, is,

That Gods anger is the speciall thing in Afflictions. Observ.

They come from his anger, (as hath beene shewed) therefore he saith, I will take mine anger from you; whereby hee meanes judgements, the effect of his anger. For in the Scriptures, anger is ordinarily taken for the fruits and effects of Gods anger, which are terrible judgements, as we may see, *Deut.* 29. 20. and so in many other places.

Judgements then are called Gods anger. Quest.

Because they issue from his anger and displeasure: for it is not the judgements, but the anger in them, which lies heavy upon the soule; when they come from Gods anger, Answ. *That the least crosse, if set on by anger proovet as the most terrible.*

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they are intollerable to the conscience, else when we suffer ill, knowing that it is not from Gods anger, but for triall of our graces, or for exercise we beare it patiently. Therefore God saith, *mine anger is turned away from him*, for this unremooved imbittereth every crosse though it be never so small. Let Gods anger be upon a man, and he will make a conceit, a very light thing, to be as a heavy crosse unto him, and vexe him both in body and state, more then mightier crosses at some other time shall. Will you see this in one instance, where God threatneth his owne deare people thus: *And the Lord will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the Emrods, and with the scab, and with the itch whereof thou canst not be healed.* What is a scab, and an iteh and the like such a terrible judgement, which in these daies is set so light by? O yes, when it comes with Gods displeasure; when the least scratch is set on fire by Gods anger, it shall consume us, it prooves incurable, as there it is threatned: *whereof thou canst not bee healed.* When the vermine came in Gods anger upon that hard-hearted King; all *Pharoahs* skill, and his *Magitians* skill, could not beate them out, because (as they confessed) *this was the finger of God.* Let any thing come as a messenger of Gods *anger*, it comes with vengeance and sticks to the soule, like a *fretting leprosie*, which when it entred into a house, many times could not be gotten out againe with pulling out stones, or scraping them, till the house were demolished.

Deut. 28. 27.

Exod. 8. 9.

Lev. 14. 45, 46.

demolished. So when Gods *anger* is raised and kindled against a person, you may remoove this and that, change place and company, and use of helpes, yet it will never leave fretting till it have consumed him, unlesse it be removed by Repentance, if it be never so small a scratch or itch, al the Physick in the world shall not cure it. For as the Love of God makes all other things in God comfortable unto us, so it is his anger which makes all his attributes terrible: as for his Power, the more he loves me, the more he is able to doe me good. But otherwise, the more he is angry and displeased, the more his other Attributes are terrible. If he be Wise, the more hee will finde out my sinnes; if hee be Powerfull and angry, the more he can revenge himselfe on me: is he Angry and Just; the more woe to me. So there is nothing in God when he is angry, but it is so much the more terrible, for this puts a sting in every thing: which when it is removed out of malignant creatures armed with a sting, then they are no more hurtfull. The sting of every evill and crosse, is Gods anger and wrath: this being removed, nothing hurts, all crosses then are gentle, milde, tractable and medicinall; when God hath once said, *For mine anger is turned away from him.* After that's gone, whatsoever remaineth is good for us, when we feele no anger in it. What is that which blowes the coles of Hell, and makes Hell, Hell, but the anger of God seazing upon the conscience, this kindles *Tophet*, and sets it a Isa. 30. 33.

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fire like a river of Brimſtone. Therefore this is a wondrous ſweet comfort and incouragement when he ſaith, *For mine anger is turned away from him.* Whence in the next place we may obſerve,

Obſerv. *That God will turne away his anger upon Repentance.*

When there is this courſe taken (formerly mentioned) to turne unto the Lord and to ſue for pardon: to vow Reformation, *Aſſur ſhall not ſave us,* and a through reformation of the particular ſinne; and when there is wrought in the heart faith to rely on Gods mercy, as the *Father of the Fatherleſſe,* in whom *they finde mercy*: then Gods anger is turned away. *God upon Repentance will turne away his anger.* The point is cleere, wee ſee when the Lord hath threatned many grievous judgements and plagues for ſinne, one upon the neck of another, denounced with all variety of expreſſions in the moſt terrible manner: yet after all that thundering, *Deut.* 28. & 29. It followes, *And it ſhall come to paſſe when all theſe things are come upon thee, the Bleſſings and the Curſes which I have ſet before thee: and thou ſhalt call them to minde among all the nations whether the Lord thy God hath driven thee: and ſhalt returne unto the Lord thy God,* &c. *That then the Lord thy God will turne thy captivity, and have compaſſion upon thee,* &c. After Repentance, you ſee the promiſe comes preſently after: not that the one is the meritorious cauſe of the other; but there

Deut. 30. 1, 2, 3

there is an order of things, God will have the one come with the other: where there is not sence of sin and humiliation, and thence prayer to God for pardon, with reformation and trusting in his Mercy; there the anger of God abides still. But where these are, *His anger is turned away.* God hath established his order, that the one of these must still follow the other.

Another excellent place to the fore-named, we have in the Chronicles. *If my people that are called by my Name, shall humble themselves and pray:* (as they did here in this Chapter, *Take words unto your selves*) *and seeke my face, and turne from their wicked wayes:* As they did here, *Ashur shall not save us, we will not ride upon Horses,* &c. We will no more rely on the barren false helps of forraine strength, what then? *I will heare from Heaven, and will forgive their sinne, and will heale their land.* Here is the promise, whereof this text is a proofe, so in all the Prophets there is a multiplication of the like instances and promises; which we will not stand upon now, as not being controversiall. It is Gods name so to doe, as we may see in that well knowne place of *Exodus. Jehovah, Jehovah, God, Mercifull and Gracious, Long suffering, and abundant in goodnesse and Truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and sinne,* &c. And so it is said, At what time so ever a sinner repents himselfe of his sinnes from the bottome of his heart, I will put all his sinnes out of my remembrance,

2 Chro. 7. 14.

Exod. 34. 6, 7.

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saith the Lord God. The Scripture is plentifull in nothing more, especially, it is the burthen of *Eze.* 18, and 33. forgivenesse of sins and removall of wrath upon repentance.

And for *Example*: see one for all the rest, let the greater include the lesser. *Manasseth* was a greater sinner then any of us all can be, because he was inabled with a greater authority to doe mischiefe, all which no private man, nor ordinary great man is capeable of, not having the like power, which he exercised to the full in all manner of cruelty, joyned with other grosse and deadly sins, and yet the Scripture shewes, that upon his humiliation and praying, he found mercy: God turned away his anger.

2 Chro. 33. 12, 13.

That of the *Prodigall*, is a parable also fitted for this purpose; who had no sooner a Resolution to returne to his Father. *Filium tum vidit*, &c. The sonne feares chiding; the father provides a banquet. So God doth transcend our thoughts in that kinde: we can no sooner humble our selves to pray to him heartily, resolving to amend our wayes and come to him, but he layes his anger aside to entertaine tearmes of love and friendship with us. As wee see in *David*, who was a good man, though he slubbered over the matter of Repentance, all which while Gods hand was so heavie upon him, that *his moisture was turned into the drought of Summer, hee roaring all the day long*. But when once hee dealt throughly in the businesse, and resolved, *I will confesse my*

Luk. 15.

Psal. 32. 3, 4.

transf.

transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sinne. Let our humiliation be reall and through, with prayer for pardon, and purpose to reforme, and presently God will shew mercy.

The Reason is cleere, *Because it is his nature so to doe:* his nature is more inclined to mercy then anger: For him to be angrie, it is still upon supposition of our sinnes. But to be mercifull and gratious, it alwayes proceedes from his owne bowels, whether wee be sinners or not; without all supposition God is still mercifull unto whom he will shew mercy. *Who is a God like unto thee* (saith the Prophet) *that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage, he retaineth not his anger for ever; because he delighteth in mercy.* Things naturally come easily, without paine, as beames from the Sunne, water from the Spring, and as heate from fire: all which come easily, because they are naturall. So mercy and love from God, come easily and willingly: it is his nature to be gratious and mercifull. Though we be sinners, If we take this course here (as the Church doth) to pray and be humbled; then it will follow, *Mine anger is turned away from him.* The Use is,

Reason.

Micah. 7. 18.

First, to observe Gods Truth in the performance of his gratious promises, who as he makes gratious promises to us, so he makes them good. His Promise is, if we confesse our sinnes hee will forgive them and be mercifull: so here

Use.

Pro. 28. 13.

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he sayes, *mine anger is turned away.* As they confesse, so he is mercifull to forgive them. It is good to observe the experiments of Gods truth.

Prov. 30. 5. Every word of God is a shield, that is, we may take it as a shield. It is an experimentall truth whereby we may arme our soules. This is an experimentall truth, that when we are humbled for our sins, God he will be mercifull unto our sins, and allay his anger, as it is in this text. Therefore

Psal. 9. 10. it is said, *Those that know thy name will trust in thee, for thou never failest those who put their trust in thee.* Let us then open our hearts unto God, and confesse our sinnes unto him, and if we resolve amendment, we shall finde the truth of his gracious promises, hee will turne aside his anger, and will never faile us if wee put our trust in

Pro. 18. 10. him. *The name of the Lord is a strong tower, and the righteous flye to it and are safe.* This name of mercy, grace, and favour, is a strong tower to distressed consciences, let us therefore remember to fly unto it when our consciences are awaked and distressed with sinne, and sence of Gods displeasure. Seeing these kinds of promises are as a citie of refuge, let us runne unto them, and we shall not be puld from the hornes of this altar, as *Ioab* once was from his: but shall at all times find grace and mercy to help us at the time of need: it is a comfortable Point. *Mine anger is turned away from him.*

Quest. But it may be said, How is Gods anger turned away from his children, when they feele it oftimes after in the course of their lives.

The

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Answ.

The Answer is, that there is a double *Anger* of God, whereby we must judge of things, for either it is

1. *Vindicative*, or } *Anger.*
2. *Fatherly*----- }

God after our first conversion, he removeth his *Vindicative anger*; after which though sometimes he threaten and frowne upon us, yet it is with a *Fatherly anger*: which God also removes with the shame and correction attending it, when wee reforme and amend our wicked wayes. There is

How anger felt may yet be said to be removed.

1. *A Child of Anger.*
2. *A Child under Anger.*

Gods Children are never children of wrath and anger, after their first conversion; but sometimes children under wrath, if they make bold with sinne, so as they cannot use their right of sonship, to go boldly to the throne of grace; because then, (though they have the right of sons) they conceive of God, as angry with them; and cannot use it so long as they live in any sinne against conscience, and so continue, untill they reforme and humble themselves (as the Church doth here) after which they can and doe rejoyce againe, claime their right, and are not either children of wrath, or under wrath. *David* after he had sinned that foule sinne, was a child under wrath, not a child of wrath. So if we make bold to sinne, we are children under wrath: for oft-times God begins correction at his owne house, if there be any disorder there.

You

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1 Pet. 4. 17. Num. 20. 12. 2 Sam. 24. 1. 1 Cor. 11. 30.

You know God was so angry with *Moses*, that he was not suffered to enter into the land of *Canaan*. And *David* when he had numbred the people, God was angry with him, and with the *Corinthians* also, for unreverent receiving of the Lords-supper. But here is a course prescribed to remove his fatherly anger, and to enjoy the beames of his countenance, and Sun-shine of his favour in Christ: if we humble our selves, confesse our sinnes, and fly unto him as the Church here doth: then we shall finde this made good: *For mine anger is turned away from him.* But it may be asked,

Quest. In times of affliction how may we know Gods anger to be remooved; when yet we endure the affliction?

Answ. The Answer is, that God is infinitely wise, and in one affliction hath many ends, as

1. When he afflicts them, it is to correct them for their sinnes: after which when they have puld out the sting of sinne by confession and humiliation, if afflictions continue, his anger doth not continue.

2. Affliction sometimes is for an exercise of Patience and Faith, and tryall of their graces; and for the exemplarie manifestation to others of Gods Goodnesse to them.

How to know afflictions are not in wrath though they continue.

But even then they may know that things come not in anger unto them, by this, that after Repentance God speakes peace unto their conscience; so that, though the grievance continue, it is with much joy in the Holy Ghost, and peace

of

of conscience, in which case, the soule knowes that it is for other ends that God continues it. Therefore the first thing in any affliction is to remoove away the coare and sting thereof by humbling our selves, as the Church here doth. After which our consciences will be at peace for other things. God hath many ends in correcting us: he will humble us, improove our afflictions to the good of others; and will gaine himselfe honour by our afflictions, sufferings and crosses. When God hath shed abroad his love in our hearts by his Spirit, then we can rejoyce in tribulation, and rejoyce under hope, though the afflictions continue, because the sting is gone, anger is remooved. Rom. 5. 5.

For mine anger is turned away from him.

The last Point we observe from hence, and gather from all these generall truths is this,

Where there is not humiliation for sinne, and hearty prayer to God, with reformation of our wayes, flying unto God for mercy (who is mercifull to the Fatherlesse) there Gods wrath continues. Observe.

For as where they are performed, his anger is turned away: so must it needs follow, that where they are no performed, his anger continueth. Therefore, let us examine our selves; The Spirit of God here speakes of *healing backslidings*, and of *turning away iniquity*; let us looke well to our selves, and to the present state of things, that our diseases be soundly cured, our personall diseases, and then let us be sensible of the diseases of the land, and pray for them; for there

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there are universall diseases and sinnes of a kingdome as well as personall. And we are guilty of the sinnes of the times, as farre as we are not humbled for them. *Paul* tels those who did not punish the incestuous person, *Why are yee not humbled rather for this deed?* Where there is a publike disease, there is a publike anger hanging over upon that disease, the cure whereof is here prescribed: to be humbled as for our selves so for others. Therefore let us beware of sinne, if we would shun wrath, especially of Idolatry, or els we shall be sure to smart for it, as *Ephraim* did, of whom the Spirit of God saith: *When Ephraim spake trembling; he exalted himselfe in Israel: but when he offended in Baal he dyed.* *Ephraim* had got such authority, what with his former victories, and by the signes of Gods favour among them, that when he spake, *there was trembling*, and he *exalted himselfe in Israel.* But when he *offended once in Baal*, that is, when he became an Idolater, *he dyed.* It is meant of the *civill death* especially; that he lost his former credit and reputation. We see then the dangerous effects of sinne, especially of Idolatrie, wherfore let us fortifie our selves against it: and blesse God that we live under such a gratious, just, and milde King, and good governement, where there are such lawes against this great sin especially; and beseech God long to continue his life and prosperity for our good amongst us. For Use then.

1 Cor. 5. 2.

Hos. 13. 1.

Use. Remember when we are to deale with God, that

that he is the great moover of all things, who if he be angry, can overturne all things, and croſſe us in all things: and can alſo heale us of all our diſeaſes. But what muſt we doe if we would be healed? Wee muſt take the courſe preſcribed here. *Take unto us words*, humble our ſelves, and have no confidence in *Aſhur*, munition, people; or in *the worke of our hands*: but truſt in God, ſo ſhall we be happy and bleſſed. Whatſoever our enemies be; yet if we can make God our rock, fortreſſe and ſhield, then it is no matter who be our enemies. *If hee be on our ſide, who can be againſt us?* Let us all (Miniſters and all) reforme our ſelves, and ſtand in the gap, afeer the courſe here preſcribed: and goe to God in a right manner, ſo we may diſſipate all the clouds of anger which may ſeeme to hang over our heads, and finde God experimentally making this promiſe good to us, which he made then to his people: *I will heale their backſliding, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from him.*

Rom. 8 31.

Therefore let us doe as *Iaacob* did with *Eſaw*, when he came incenſed with mighty diſpleaſure againſt his brother. *Iaacob* comes before him humbly, proſtrates himſelfe before him, and ſo turnes away his anger. So when God is angry with us, and comes againſt us, let us humble our ſelves before him, to appeaſe him: as *Abigall* quieted *David* by humbling her ſelfe before him, when he had a purpoſe to deſtroy her family. So let us come before God in humility

A certaine way to ſhun anger.

Gen. 23. 3, 4.

1 Sam. 25. 23

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mility of ſoule, and God will turne away his anger. As when there was a great plague begun in the armie, *Aaron* ſtood with his *cenſer* betwixt the living and the dead, offering incenſe and making attonement for them, wherby the plague was ſtayed. So in any wrath felt or feared, for our ſelves, or the ſtate we live in: let every one hold his cenſure, and offer the incenſe of prayer; *Take with you words.* God is wondrouſly mooved to pitty, by the incenſe of theſe ſweet odours offered up by Chriſt unto the Father, beleeve it, it is the onely ſafe courſe to begin in Heaven, ſuch a beginning will have a bleſſed ending, other courſes, politique and ſubordinate helps muſt alſo be taken, but all is to no purpoſe unleſſe we begin in Heaven: becauſe all things under God are ruled and mooved by him; who when hee is favourable, makes all the creatures pliable unto us; but eſpecially makes this good; *I will heale their backſliding, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from him.*

Num. 16. 48.

Rev. 8

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The end of the ſixt Sermon.

THE

THE SEVENTH SERMON.

Hos. 14. 5.

I will be as the Dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the Lillie, and cast forth his Roote as Lebanon:
His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the Olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.

THE Church (as we heard) had beene humbled, and therefore is comforted: it is usuall in the Scriptures, especially in the Prophetical parts thereof, after terrible threatnings to come with sweet promises: because God in all ages hath a Church. Therefore God in this Chapter takes

Joel. 2. 27, 28.
Hos. 3 14, 15
Isa. 1. 18, 19.
Deut. 3 1.
Ier. 3. 12.
Ier. 30. 1.

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takes this courſe, he makes gratious promiſes to this people, grounded upon the former part of the Chapter, wherein God had dictated unto them a forme of Prayer, Repentance and Reformation. *Take with you words and turne to the Lord, ſay unto him, take away all iniquity, and receive us gratiouſly.* &c. Whereupon a Reformation is promiſed, *Aſſhur ſhall not ſave us, wee will not ride upon horſes,* &c. Which was a reformation of that nationall ſinne which they were guilty of, *falſe Confidence.* Now (as we have heard) God anſwers them to every particular. He makes a gratious promiſe, *that he will heale their backſliding,* according to their prayer, *Take away all iniquity,* and to that, *Receive us gratiouſly;* he anſwers, *I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from him.*

Now it cannot bee but that God ſhould regard the deſires of his owne Spirit, when both the words and Spirit proceed from him, therefore he goes on more fully to anſwer their deſire of *doing good to them:* ſaying,

I will be as the Dew to Iſraell, &c.

In which words the holy Prophet doth firſt by a *Metaphor* and borrowed ſpeech ſet downe the ground of all happineſſe. So that there is here given a more full ſatisfaction to the deſires of the Church.

1. *The cauſe of all,* (*I will be as the Dew*) &c.
2. *The particular Perſons to whom:* (*to Iſraell.*)
3. *The fruit of this followes:* (*he ſhall grow as the Lillie, and caſt forth his roote as Lebanon*)

Now

Now the words read are a fuller ſatisfaction to the deſires of Gods people, which were ſtirred up by his owne Spirit. *I will be as the Dew unto Iſrael*, where,

1. You have ſet downe, *The cauſe of all*, which followes: *God by his gratious Spirit will be as the Dew unto Iſrael.*

2. And then upon that, the proſperous ſucceſſe this *Dew* of Gods Spirit hath in them, *They ſhall grow as the Lillie.*

I but the *Lilly* growes, but hath no ſtability: every thing that growes is not well rooted. Therefore, hee adds in the ſecond place, *They ſhall caſt out their rootes as Lebanon*, that is, with growth they ſhall have ſtability: not only grow in height ſpeedily, but alſo grow faſt in the roote with firmeneſſe. *Object. 1.*

And likewiſe, as every thing that growes in roote and firmeneſſe doth not ſpread it ſelfe, he ſayes he ſhall not only grow upward, and take roote downe-wards, *But his branches ſhall ſpread*; whereby he ſhall be more fruitfull and comfortable to others. *Object. 2.*

O! but every thing that growes, is rooted and ſpreads, is not for all that fruitfull; therefore he ſaith, they ſhall be as the *Olive tree, his beauty ſhall be as the Olive tree for fruitfullneſſe.* *Object. 3.*

Yet, though the Olive be fruitfull, it hath no pleaſant ſmell, nor good taſte, therefore he adds another bleſſing to that: they ſhall in regard of their pleaſantneſſe to God and man, that *Object. 4.*

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shall delight in them, be *as the smell of Lebanon*. Which was a wondrous pleasant delightfull place, which yeelded a pleasant savour round about. So we see what a compleate kinde of growth this is: wherein blessing upon blessing is promised, the Holy Ghost cannot enough satisfie himselfe in variety of comfortable expressions. Nothing is left unsatisfied that the heart can propound. He will make them *grow*, be *stedfast*, *fruitfull*, *delightfull*, *and pleasant*. So that we have here to consider:

1. *The favour and blessing that he promiseth*, to be as the *dew to Israel*.
2. *The excellency of it, in divers particulars*.
3. *The order wherein it is promised*.

Before we come to the words themselves, if we remember and read over the former part of the Prophesie, we shall find it full of terrible curses; all opposite unto that heere promised, to shew,

Observ. *We can never be in so disconsolate a state, but God can alter all.*

That God hath a salve for all sores. He hath a right hand as well as a left; *Blessings* as well as *Curses*: *Mercy* as well as *Iustice*, which is more proper to his nature then that. Therefore, let Christian soules never be discouraged with their condition and state whatsoever it is.

Reason. Eccles. 7. 14. For, as there are many maladies, so there are many remedies opposite to them; as *Salomon* saith, *This is set over against that*, &c. If there be a thousand kinds of ils, there are many thousand kinds

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kindes of remedies. For, God is larger in his helpes, then we can be in our diſeaſes and diſtreſſes, whatſoever they are: Therfore it is good to make this Uſe of it. To be ſo conceited of God as may draw us nearer unto him upon all occaſions. Zach. 1. 19, 20 21.

Uſe.

Againe, We ſee here; how large the Spirit of God is in expreſſions of the particulars: *I will be as the Dew unto Iſrael, and he ſhall grow as the Lilly: and caſt forth his roots as Lebanon: his branches ſhall ſpread, and his beauty be large*, &c. Whereunto tends all this largeneſſe of expreſſion? God doth it in mercy unto us, who eſpecially need it, being in a diſtreſſed, diſconſolate eſtate. Therefore they are not words waſtfully ſpent; we may marvell ſometimes in *Iſaiah*, and ſo in ſome other Prophets, to ſee the ſame things in ſubſtance ſo often repeated, though with variety of lively expreſſions, as it is (for the moſt part) the manner of every Prophet. Surely, becauſe it is uſefull and profitable, the people of God need it. There is nor never was any man in a drouping ſinking condition, but hee deſires line upon line, word upon word, promiſe upon promiſe, expreſſion upon expreſſion.

1.

One would thinke, is not a word of God ſufficient?

Object.

Yes, for him, but not for us; we have doubting and drouping hearts, and therefore God adds Sacraments and Seales, not onely one Sacrament, but two; And in the Sacrament, not onely Bread, but Wine alſo: to ſhew that

Anſw.

Christ is all in all. What large expressions are here thinks a prophane heart, what needs this. As if God knew us not better then we know our selves. Whensoever thou art touched in conscience with the sence of thy sinnes, and knowest how great, how powerfull, how Holy a God thou hast to deale with, who can indure no impure thing, thou wilt never find fault with his large expressions in his Word and Sacraments; and with the variety of his promises, when hee transslates out of the book of nature into his own booke, all expressions of excellent things to spread forth his mercy and love. Is this needlesse? No, we need all, he that made us, redeemed us, preserves us, knowes us better then we our selves, he who is infinite in wisedome and love, takes this course.

And marke againe in the next place, how the Holy Ghost fetcheth here this comfort from things that are most excellent in their kinde. *They shall grow as the Lillie*, that growes fairely and speedily: *And they shall take roote as Lebanon*; to shew that a Christian should be the excellenteſt in his kinde, he compares him in his right temper and state, to the most excellent things in nature. To the *Sunne*, to *Lions*, *Trees of Lebanon Cedars*, and *Olive Trees* for fruitfullnesse: and all to shew, that a Christian should not be an ordinary man. All the excellencies of nature are little enough to set out the excellency of a Christian; he must be an extraordinary singular man. Saith Christ, *What singular*

thing

thing doyee? He muſt not be a common man. Therefore, when God would raiſe his people, hee tels them, they ſhould not bee common men, but grow as *Lillies*, be rooted as *Trees*, fruitfull as *Olives*, and pleaſant beautifull, as the goodly ſweet-ſmelling trees of *Libanus*. How gratiouſly doth God condeſcend unto us, to teach us by outward things, how to helpe our ſoules by our ſenſes; that when we ſee the growth, fruitfullneſſe, and ſweetneſſe of other things we ſhould call to mind what we ſhould be, and what God hath promiſed we ſhall be, if we take this courſe and order formerly preſcribed. Indeed a wiſe Chriſtian indowed with the Spirit of God, extracts a quinteſſence out of every thing, eſpecially from thoſe that God ſingles out to teach him his duty by, when he looks upon any plant, fruite, or tree that is pleaſant, delightfull and fruitfull, it ſhould put him in mind of his duty.

I will be as the dew to Iſrael, &c.

Theſe ſweet promiſes in their order follow immediately upon this, that God would freely love them, and ceaſe to be angry with them: then he adds the fruits of his love to their ſoules, and the effects of thoſe fruits in many particulars, whence firſt of all we obſerve,

Obſerv. *Gods love is a fruitfull love.*

Whereſoever he loves, he makes the things lovely: We ſee things lovely, and then we love them: but God ſo loves us, that in loving us he makes us lovely. So ſaith God by the Prophet.

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Ezek 16.8,9. Iſa 57.18. *I have ſeene his wayes and will heale him: I will lead him alſo and reſtore comforts unto him, and to his mourners.* And from this experience of the fruitfullneſſe of Gods love, the Church is brought in rejoycing. Iſa 61.10. *I will greatly rejoyce in the Lord; my ſoule ſhall be joyfull in my God: for he hath cloathed me with the garments of ſalvation; hee hath covered me with the robe of righteouſneſſe: as a bridegroome decketh himſelfe with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth her ſelfe with her jewels.* Thus he makes us ſuch as may be aimeable objects of his love, that he may delight in.

Reaſon For his love is the love, as of a gratious ſo of a powerfull God, that can alter all things to us, and us to all things; he can bring us good out of every thing, and doe us good at all times, according to the Churches Prayer: *Doe good unto us.*

Vſe. Wherefore ſeeing God can doe us good, and ſince his love is not onely a pardoning love, to take away his anger; but alſo ſo compleat and fruitfull a love, ſo full of ſpirituall favours: *I will be as the dew unto Iſrael: and he ſhall grow up as the Lilly*, &c. Let us ſtand more upon Gods love then we have formerly done, and ſtrive to have our hearts inflamed with love towards God againe. As the Prophet *David* doth: Pſa. 116.1. *I love the Lord, becauſe he hath heard my voyce and my ſupplications.* It may be for outward condition, that even where God loves they may goe backewards ſo and ſo: but for their beſt part their ſoules, God will be as the

dew

dew to them; and *they shall grow as Lebanon.* God will be good to them in the best things. And a Christian when he begins to know what the best things are concerning a better life: he then learneth to valew spirituall blessings and favours above all other whatsoever. Therfore God suits his promises to the desires of his children; that he would water their dry soules, that he would be as the dew unto them. Gods love is a fruitfull love, and fruitfull in the best things. As we know what *David* saith: *There be many who say, who will shew us any good, Lord lift thou up the light of thy Countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladnesse in my heart, more then in the time that their corne, and their wine increased.* So God fits his gratious promise answerable to the desires of a gratious heart. Psa. 4. 6, 7.

I will be as the Dew to Israel.

2. *The excellencies of Dew in divers particulars.*

To come to the words in particular, for this is the ground of all that followes, *I will be as the dew unto Israel.*

Quest. How will God be as the Dew to Israell?

Answ. This is especially meant of and performed to the Church under the New Testament, especially next unto Christs time; when the Dew of grace fell in greatest aboundance upon the Church. The Comfortable, Sanctifying, Fruitfull Grace of God is compared to *Dew* in many respects. *Why the Grace of God is compared to Dew.*

1. *Because it comes freely from God.*

First, *The Dew doth come from above.* God sends it, it drops from above and cannot bee

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commanded by the creature. So all other gifts and especially this perfect gift, the Grace of God, comes from above, from the Father of lights: there is no principle of grace naturally within a man. It is as childish to thinke that grace comes from any principle within us, as to thinke that the dew which fals upon a stone is the sweat of the stone: As children thinke that the stone sweats, when it is the dew that's fallen upon it. Certainly our hearts in regard of themselves are barren and dry: wherfore Gods Grace, in regard of the Originall, is compared to *Dew*, which should teach us to go to God, as the Church doth here, and pray him to deale graciously with us, to do good to us, for this cause laying open our soules unto him, to shed his Grace into them.

Grace comes insensibly and invisibly.

Thirdly, *The Dew doth fall Insensibly and Invisibly.* So the grace of God, wee feele the comfort, sweetnesse and operation of it, but it fals insensibly without observation. Inferiour things heere feele the sweet and comfortable influence of the Heavens, but who sees the active influence upon them, which how it is derived from superiour bodies to the inferiour is not observable? As our Saviour speaks of the beginnings of grace and workings of it. *The* John. 3. 8. *winde bloweth where it listeth, and thou heareſt the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it commeth, or whether it goeth: so is every one that is borne of the Spirit.* It workes we know not how: we feele the worke, but the manner of working is unknowne to us. Grace therefore is wrought undiscer-

undiſcernably. No man can ſee the converſion of another, nay, no man almoſt can diſcerne his owne converſion at firſt; Therefore this Queſtion ſhould not much trouble you; ſhew us the firſt houre, the firſt time of your converſion and entrance into the ſtate of grace. Grace (to many) *fals like the dew*, by little and little, drop and drop, line upon line, it fals ſweetly and undiſcernably upon them at the firſt. Therefore, it is hard to ſet downe the firſt time, ſeeing as our bleſſed Saviour ſpeakes, grace at the firſt is wondrous little, likened to a graine of Muſtard-ſeed. But though it be ſmall at firſt; yet nothing is more glorious and beautifull afterwards, for from a ſmall ſeed, it grows to over-ſpread and bee great, ſhooting out branches. And as the root of *Ieſſe* was a deſpiſed ſtock and in ſhew a dead root, yet thence Chriſt roſe, a branch as high as Heaven. So the beginning of a Chriſtian, is deſpiſed and little, like a dead ſtocke as it were, but they grow upward and upward ſtill, till they come to Heaven it ſelfe. Thus we ſee there is nothing in the world more undiſcernable in the beginning then the worke of grace, which muſt make us not over-curious to examine exactly the firſt beginnings thereof, becauſe it is as the falling of the *Dew* or *the blowing of the winde*.

Mark. 4. 31, 32.

Pro. 4. 18.

Again, as it fals undiſcernably and inviſibly, ſo *very ſweetly and mildly*, not violating the nature or courſe of any thing, but rather helping and cheriſhing the ſame, or if it make any change in

Grace worketh ſweetly and mildly upon the ſoule.

in any thing, it doth it mildly and gently. So usually (unlesse it be in some extraordinary case) God workes upon the soule by his grace mildly and sweetly: Grace works sweetly upon the soule, preserving its freedome, so as man when he begins to be good shall be freely good from inward principles wrought in him. His judgement shall like the course he takes, and be cleane opposite to others that are contrary, from an inward principle, as free now in altering his course as formerly he was in following the other. There is no violence but in regard of corruption. God works strongly and mildly; strongly for he changeth a stone into a fleshy heart, and yet sweetly, he breakes not any power of nature, but advanceth it: for grace doth not take away or imprison nature, but lift it up and set it at liberty: for it makes the will stronger and freer, the judgement sounder, the understanding cleerer, the affections more orderly, it makes all things better, so that no violence is offered to nature.

2. Again, Grace is compared to *Dew, In regard of the operations of Dew.* For what effects hath *Dew* upon the earth? First, it cooles the ayre when it fals, and then with cooleneſſe it hath a fructifying vertue: for falling especially on tender heerbs and plants, it soakes into the root of them, and makes them fruitfull. So it is with the grace of Gods Spirit, it cooles the soule scorched with the sense of Gods Anger, as indeed all our soules will be (when we have to deale

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deale with God who is *a consuming fire*) till we take that course to looke upon him in Christ for the pardon of sinne: after which his Grace and the sense of it cooleth, asswageth and speakes peace to an uncomfortable, disconsolate heart. This voice, *Sonne be of good comfort thy sins are forgiven thee*, O! this hath a cooling in it: and this also, *This day shalt thou be with me in Paradice*, O! how it cooled and cheered the good theefe, and comforted him. And so when God sayes unto the soule, *I am thy salvation*, O! when the soule feeles this, how is it cooled and refreshed?

Heb. 12. 29.

1. *Grace like dew is a cooler.*

2. *Grace fructifieth as dew doth.*

And the soule is not onely cooled and refreshed, but, *It is also sweetned and made fruitfull with comfort to the soule.* If we were to see a man in the pangs of conscience, stung with fiery temptations, as with so many fiery serpents and poysoned darts, which drinke up the spirits, and presents God a consuming fire, and hell beneath full of insupportable torments set on by the insupportable wrath of God: then we should know what it were to have grace in this efficatious manner, cooling and refreshing the soul that hath these fiery darts stucke into it of violent strong temptations, which to the present sense, are the flashes and beginnings of Hell. O! It is an excellent thing to have the Grace of God in such a case to asswage and coole the maladies of a distressed soule, which for the present seemes to burn in a flame of wrath. As it cooles, so also it makes the heart fruitful, our hearts of themselves being

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being as the barren wildernes and wild desert. Now God by his grace turnes the wildernes into water springs, as it appeareth in many places of the Prophets. Saith God: *For I will powre water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground, I will powre my Spirit upon thy seed,* &c. So Grace it turnes the barren wilderneſſe, the heart dry of it ſelfe, and makes it fruitfull. We know what *Paul* ſaid of *Oneſimus*, a fruitleſſe ſervant, nay a fugitive theefe; he is unfruitfull no longer (ſaith he) now that he is become a convert, another, a new man, now he will do good ſervice. A man is no ſooner altered by the dew of grace, but howſoever formerly hee were a naughty hurtfull perſon, of whom every man was affraid, becauſe of his wickedneſſe, yet now he is a fruitfull perſon, and ſtrives to bring forth fruits worthy of amendment of life.

Pſal. 107. 33, 34.

Iſa 44.3.

Iſa 45.8.

Philem. 16.

Mat.3.8.

6. *Grace is unreſiſtable.*

And we may add one more in the next place, *in regard of the unreſiſtableneſſe thereof*; for as nothing can hinder the dew from falling from the ſweet influence of Heaven unto us, or hinder the working of thoſe ſuperiour bodies upon the inferiour, or hinder the wind from blowing: ſo, who can hinder Gods Grace? they may out of malice hinder the meanes of it, and hinder the gratious working of the Spirit, by diſcouragements in others: which is a ſigne of a diveliſh ſpirit, when yet God hath a hand in that too after a ſort. For it raineth in one city and not in another by Gods appointment, but nothing can

Iob 38.37.

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can hinder where God will have the dew and water and shine of the influence of grace worke, nothing in the world can stop it. So it is said in that excellent Prophesie of Christ, and his Kingdome. *He shall come downe like raine upon the mowen grasse: as showers that water the Earth, which as they coole and fructifie, so come they irresistibly.* Psal. 72. 6.

Let none therefore be discouraged with the deadnesse, drinesse, and barrennesse of their owne hearts: but let them know that God doth gratiously promise (if they will take the course formerly set downe) to be, *as the dew unto them.* Therefore let them come unto the Ordinances of God with wondrous hope, confidence and faith that he will be as *dew* unto them, that seeing he hath appointed variety of Ordinances; the Word and Sacraments, he will blesse those meanes of his owne ordaining and appointing, for his owne ends. He that hath gratiously appointed such meanes of grace, will he not blesse them? especially having promised; *I will be as the dew unto Israel.* Therefore let us attend upon the Ordinances, and not keepe away though our hearts be barren, drie and unfruitfull: God is above the heart, and able to turne the wildernesse into a fruitfull place: he can make the heart a fit habitation for himselfe to dwell in. Let us by faith attend upon the Ordinances, if we find not comfort in one Ordinance, let us go unto another, and another, comfort and helpe shall come, especially, if with the Church, we goe Cant. 3. 4.

Vse. *Against discouragement in regard of our barrennes in goodnesse.*

go a little further. For the promiſe is, *I will be as the dew unto Iſrael.*

3. *The order of Gods promiſe.*

But marke the order wherein hee makes this promiſe; Firſt, he gives grace to pray to him. *Take away all iniquity, and receive us gratiouſly*, doe good to us. Then hee gives a ſpirit of reformation, promiſing amendment, whereupon this followeth, *that he will forgive their ſinnes, love them freely*, &c. And bee, *as the dew unto Iſrael.* He will be as the dew unto Iſrael, but he will give them grace firſt to be humbled, confeſſe ſinne and pray to God for grace and forgiveneſſe. There is an order of working in the ſoule: God giveth Juſtification before Sanctification, and before he freeth from the guilt of ſinne, he gives grace to confeſſe ſinne. *If we confeſſe our ſinnes he is faithfull and juſt to forgive us our ſinnes, and to cleanſe us from them*, ſaith S. *Iohn.* Where theſe goe before, grace will follow: and where they doe not, there will be no Sanctification. Therefore let us conſider the order, for whereſoever God *takes away iniquity* and heales their ſoules in regard of the guilt of their ſinnes: unto thoſe he will be as dew. Therfore if we have ſtill barren ſoules, without deſires or ſtrength to goodneſſe; certainely our ſinnes are ſtill upon the file, for Juſtification is never without holineſſe of life: *Whoſoever is in Chriſt, he is a new creature.* When this is done, God will be *as the dew*: becauſe he doth pardon our ſinnes for this cauſe, that hee may thereby fit us to be entertained in the covenant, and are

1 Ioh. 1. 9.

2 Cor. 5. 17.

we

we fit to bee in covenant with him untill our natures be altered? Therfore whenſoever he enters into covenant with any, hee changeth their natures, that they may bee friends, and have communion with him. Then the ſame ſoule which cryeth, *take away all iniquity*: deſireth alſo the *Dew of grace* to make it better; this order is not onely neceſſary on Gods part, but in regard of the ſoule alſo. For was there ever any ſoule from the beginning of the world that truely deſired forgiveneſſe of ſinnes, which did not alſo therewith deſire grace? ſuch a ſoule were but an hypocriticall ſoule. For if it bee rightly touched with ſorrow, it deſires as well ability to ſubdue ſinne, as forgiveneſſe of ſinne: Holineſſe and Righteouſneſſe with forgiveneſſe. Luk. 1. 75.

Vſe 1. Therefore leaſt wee deceive our ſelves, let this be an uſe of tryall from the order, that if we finde not grace wrought in our natures to reſtraine ſinne, and alter our former lewd courſes, our ſinnes are not yet forgiven. For, whereſoever God takes away ſinne, and *loves freely*: there alſo he gives the beſt fruits of his love, beſtowes the *dew* of his grace to worke upon and alter our natures. Chriſt came not by *blood* alone to die for us, but by *water* alſo to ſanctifie us. He will not onely *love freely*; but he will be *as the dew* where he loves freely: therefore if we have not ſanctifying grace, wee have not as yet pardoning grace. For, we know the Prophet joynes them both together: *Bleſſed is* Pſal 32. 1, 2.

the

the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. If we retaine a guilefull false spirit, our sins are not forgiven, we see both these are put together.

Vse 2. And seeing all these good things come from God, it is necessary to take notice of what hath beene said of Gods goodnesse, that we doe not rob God of his due glory, nor our selves of the due comfort that we may draw thence. The *Egyptians* had the river *Nylus* that overflowed the land every yeere, caused by anniversary winds, which so blew into the mouth of the river, that it could not discharge it selfe into the sea: whereupon it overflowed the bankes, and left a fruitfull slime upon the ground, so that they needed not raine as other Countries, because it was watered with *Nylus*. Hereupon they did not depend upon Gods blessing, nor were so holy as they should: but were proud of their river, as is intimated by *Moses* unto the people. *But the land whether thou goest in to possesse it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence yee came out, where thou sowest thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbes: But the land whether yee goe to possesse it, is a land of hills and vallies, and drinketh water of the raine of heaven: a land which the Lord thy God careth for, &c.* They having more immediately raine from Heaven, saw Gods hand in watering it, whereas the *Egyptians* did not. And what makes a *Papist* to be so unthankfull? He thinkes he can with his owne industry water his owne ground with

Deut. 11. 10, 11.

some-

ſomewhat in himſelfe. What makes another man thankfull on the other ſide? Becauſe he knoweth hee hath all things by dependance from the firſt cauſe: for as in nature, *In God we live, move and have our being*: much more in grace; we have all our nouriſhment, ſpirituall being, mooving and life from the *dew* of Heaven: all our heat is from the *Sonne of Righteouſneſſe*, which makes a Chriſtian life, to be nothing elſe but a gratious dependance. *I can doe all things* (ſaith Saint *Paul*) big and great words. O! but it is, *through Chriſt that ſtrengthens me*. Theſe things muſt not be forgotten, for a child of the Church, is a child of grace, by grace he is what he is, he hath all from Heaven. Suitable to the former place is that in *Ezekiel*. *And the land of Ægypt ſhall be deſolate and waſte, and they ſhall know that I am the Lord, becauſe hee hath ſaid, the river is mine, and I have made it.* He ſhall be deſolate, becauſe he boaſts and brags of his river, and depends not upon God for the ſweet ſhowers of the former and the latter raine: they boaſted becauſe it was a fat fruitfull countrie, which the *Romans* called their granary. But we muſt looke for all from Heaven; God by his Spirit will be as the dew.

Act. 17. 28.

Mal. 4. 2.

Phil. 4. 13.

Ezc. 29. 9.

You know in Paradiſe there were foure rivers that watred the garden of God, that ſweet place, and made it fruitfull; but the heads of all theſe rivers were out of Paradice. So it is with the Church of God, *There is a River, the ſtreames whereof makes glad the Citie of God* (as the Pſalmiſt

That the head whence all bleſſings come is in Heaven.

Pſal. 46. 4.

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miſt ſpeake) many pretious comfortable graces (the particulars whereof follow) but where is the head-ſpring of that river? it is in Heaven. We have all from God, through Chriſt the *Mediator*: So though we have of the *Water* and *Dew*, yet notwithſtanding the head and ſpring of all is from without the Church, in *Heaven*, in *Chriſt*, in the *Mediator*. And therefore in all the excellent things we enjoy in the Church, let us looke to the Originall firſt cauſe; Chriſt by his Spirit, *He is as the Dew* to his *Church*.

Vſe 3.
Queſt.
Anſw.
How to have grace to ſanctifie our natures.

This affoords likewiſe an *Vſe of Direction*, How to come to have grace to ſanctifie and alter our natures? Doe as the Church doth heere, deſire it of God. Lord teach me to ſee and know my ſinnes: Lord, *Take away all iniquity, and receive me graciouſly*: Heale my ſoule for I have ſinned againſt thee. O love mee freely, Turne away thy angry face from my ſinnes, and be as the dew unto my barren ſoule; my dead ſoule, O quicken it, make good thy promiſe, come ſwiftly, come ſpeedily, come unreſiſtably, *like raine upon the mowen graſſe*; as ſhowers, to water with the dew of grace, and fructifie my drie parched ſoule. Thus we ſhould be earneſt with God for grace for our ſelves, and for the Churches abroad, for our Church and State at home. Therefore let ſuch an uſe be made of it generally, as God and not other forraigne helps may eſpecially bee truſted in: for it is the onely way to deſtruction, to let God alone,

Pſal. 72. 6.

alone, and to trust to this body, and that body, for in this case (many times) God makes those we thus trust in our destruction, as the *Assyrians* and *Babylonians* were the ruine of the ten Tribes. But begin alwayes first in Heaven, set that great wheele a working, and he will make all things comfortable, especially for our soules: then we shall not only find him to make good this promise, *I will be as the Dew unto Israell*: but the residue which follow after.

He shall grow as the Lillie, &c

Those unto whom God is *Dew*, a double blessing, he will make them grow, and so grow as they shall grow up as the *Lillie*: Thistles and nettles, and ill weeds grow apace also, but not as Lillies; but Gods children are *Lillies*, and then they grow as *Lillies*.

Quest. How doe Christians grow like *Lillies*?

Answ. *Christians grow like Lillies.*

1. *In regard of beauty and glory.* Mat. 6. 29.

First, *for beauty and glory*. There is such a kind of glory and beauty in that plant, that it is said by our Saviour, That *Salomon in all his royalty was not arrayed like one of these*, because his was a borrowed glory from the creature, but the *Lillie* hath a native beauty of its owne.

2. *In regard of sweet fragrant smell.*

Againe, the *Lillie* hath *a sweet and fragrant smell*, so have Christians, a sweetnesse and shining expresst in their conversation; as we have it a little after: *His smell shall be as Lebanon*, &c.

3. *In regard of purity.*

And then againe, in regard *of purity and whitenesse*: So Christians are pure and unspotted in their conversation, and their aime is purity and unspottednesse: whitenesse betokens

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an unstained conversation. So the people and children of God, they are *Lillies*, beautifull and glorious in the eyes of God, and of all those who have spirituall eyes, to discerne what spirituall excellency is: howsoever in regard of the world their life be hidden. Their excellency is vailed with infirmities, afflictions and disgraces by the malignant Church: yet in Gods esteeme, and in the esteeme of his children they are *Lillies*; all the dirt in the world cast upon a pearle, cannot alter the nature of it: So, though the world goe about to besmeere these Lillies with false imputations, yet they are *Lillies* still, and have a glory upon them; for they have a better spirit and nature then the world hath. And they are sweeter in their conversation then the world; for when they have begun to be Christians, they sweeten their speeches and discourses. There is no Christian who is not of a sweet conversation, so farre as grace hath altered him, he is beautifull, lovely and sweet, and hath the whitenesse of sincerity.

4. *In regard of suddaine growth.*

Now as Gods children are *Lillies*, and then grow as *Lillies* for sweetnesse, glory and beauty: so they are like *Lillies* especially, in regard of suddaine growth. When God gives a blessing, there is a strange growth on a suddaine, as it is observed of this plant, that it growes very much in a night; So Gods children, when his blessing is upon them, they thrive marvellously in a short space. To make this cleere, when the dew of grace fell in our Saviours time upon

The first spring of the Gospell was speedie in growth.

the

the Chriſtian world, what a world of Lillies grew ſuddenly. Three thouſand in one day, at one Sermon, converted by *Peter*: The Kingdome of Heaven ſuffered violence in *Iohn Baptiſts* time, that is, the people thronged after the meanes of grace, and offered a holy violence to the things of God. So when this dew of grace fell, it was propheciedof it, *The youth of thy wombe* (ſaith he) *ſhall be as the morning dew*. The Dew comes out of the wombe of the morning, for the morning begets it. *Thy youth ſhall be as the dew of the morning*; that is, they ſhall come in great abundance, as we ſee it fell out in the firſt ſpring of the Goſpell. In the ſpace of forty yeares by the preaching of the Apoſtles, what a deale of good was done through a great part of the world: How did the Goſpell then breake out like lightning by meanes of that bleſſed Apoſtle *Paul*, who himſelfe carried it through a great part of the world.

Acts 2.41. Mat. 11.12.

Pſal. 110.3.

And now in the ſecond ſpring of the Goſpell, when *Luther* began to preach: in the period of a few yeares, how many Countries were converted and turned to the Goſpell? *England*, *Scotland*, *Swethland*, *Denmarke*, the *Palatinate*, a great part of *France*, *Bohemia* and of the *Netherlands*. How many *Lillies* grew up here on a ſuddaine? Sudden growths are ſuſpected, and well they may be, but when God will bleſſe, in a ſhort ſpace a great deale of worke ſhall be done. For God is not tied to length of time. Hee makes water to be wine every

The ſecond ſpring of the Goſpell was alſo ſpeedie.

Water every yeere turned into wine.

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very yeare in tract of time, for he turnes the water of Heaven into the juyce of the grape, so there is water turned into wine, that done in tract of time, which he can doe in a shorter time, as he did in the Gospell, *Iohn* 2.1,&c. Where is the difference? that he did that miraculously in a short time, which he usually effects in continuance of time. So now many times he doth great matters in a short time, that his power may be knowne and seene the more: as wee see now in these warres of *Germany*, how quickly God hath turned his hand to helpe his Church, and hisse for a despised forgotten nation to trample down the insulting, affliction, menacing power of the proud enemy: and hee can doe so still if our sins hinder him not. Surely if we stand still and behold the salvation of the Lord, we shall see great matters effected in a little time. *They shall grow as the Lillie*, the accomplishment of this promise is not wholly yet come, for there be blessed times approaching, wherein when the *Iewes* are converted, *They shall grow as the Lillie*, in those glorious times there spoken of, at the conversion of the *Iewes*, and *fulnesse of the gentiles* comming in: the accomplishment whereof we expect, to the rejoycing of our hearts; that they should at length proove indeed with us the true children of *Abraham*.

Rom. 11.

Vse. Therefore, we should make this *Vse* of all, labour that the *Dew* of God, may proove the *Dew* of Grace, that God would make us *Lillies*. If we would be beautifull and glorious, have

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a luſtre upon us, and be as much beyond others as pearles are beyond common ſtones, and as *Lillies* are better then *Thornes* and *Briers*, let us labour to have the Grace of God, ſo to be accounted Lillies, whatſoever the world accounts of us.

Againe, if the worke be wrought upon us, though the imputations of the world be otherwiſe, let us comfort our ſelves: God accounts me a Lillie: ſet this againſt the baſe eſteeme of the world, conſidering how God judgeth, and thoſe who are led by his Spirit, who judge better of us. And in all aſſociation, combination, and linking in acquaintance, labour to joyne with thoſe that are *Lillies*, who caſt a good and a ſweet ſavour. For we ſhall gaine by their acquaintance, whom *Salomon* affirmeth to be better, and more excellent then their brethren. What are other people then? they are but *Thornes*; therefore let not thoſe which are *Lillies* have too much, or neere acquaintance with *Thornes*, leaſt they prick us, and (as our bleſſed Saviour ſaith) turning againe all to berent us. It is ſaid of our Bleſſed Saviour in the *Canticles*. *He feedeth among the Lillies*. And indeed where is there any true delight to be had under Heaven, but in their company who are gratious. What can a man receive from prophane ſpirits, in regard of comfort of ſoule? nothing, they are as the barren wilderneſſe that can yeeld nothing, their hearts are empty, therefore their tongues are worth nothing. But let our delight

2.

Pro. 12. 26.

Mat. 7. 6.

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Pſal. 101. 6.

be with *David* toward the moſt excellent of the land, and then we ſhall not onely *grow as the Lillie*, but (as it followeth) *we ſhall caſt forth our rootes as Lebanon.*

And caſt forth his rootes as Lebanon.

Neceſſity of growth in divers reſpects.

Becauſe we have ſpoken of growth, and ſhall have occaſion to touch it hereafter, we will not be large in the Point. God here promiſeth a growth not onely to the Church, but to every particular Chriſtian: and it is very neceſſary it ſhould be ſo; for without growth, neither can we give God his due honour, nor he receive the ſmell of a ſweet Sacrifice from us, as is fit. Nor can we without it with-ſtand our enemies, or beare our croſſes that God may call us too. Againe, without growth and ſtrength we cannot performe thoſe great duties that God requires at our hands of Thankfulneſſe: nor doe things ſo cheerefully and ſweetly as may be comfortable to us. In ſumme, without growth we can doe nothing acceptably, either to God or his people: the more Grace, the more acceptance, Which is ſpoken, that we may value the Promiſes, this eſpecially, that we ſhall grow up in Grace and Knowledge, *as the Lillie, and caſt forth our rootes as Lebanon.*

But how ſhall we come to grow?

Anſw.

I.

We muſt goe to God claiming the promiſes in a right order.

Goe to God that we may continually have from him the ſanctifying dew of his grace: goe firſt for pardon of ſinne, then for a heart to reforme our wayes, to enter in a new covenant for the time to come, that wee will not *truſt in*

A ſhur-

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Aſhur, but will renounce our particular perſonall ſinnes, after which we ſhall find ſanctifying grace, ſo as the *dew* of Gods Spirit will make us grow: therefore, take this order to improove the promiſes. Goe to God for his love in Chriſt, for the pardoning of ſinne, and accepting of us in him, that we may find a ſence of his love in accepting of our perſons, in the pardoning of our ſinne, which is the ground of love: for then this ſence of his love will kindle our love towards him againe, feeling that we are in the ſtate of grace. Then goe to God for his promiſe in this order: Lord, thou haſt promiſed that thou wilt be as the *dew*, and that we ſhall grow as *Lillies*: make good thy promiſe then, that I may finde the effectuall power of it transforming my ſoule into the bleſſed Image of thy deare Sonne.

2. *We muſt uſe all meanes of growth.*

And know, that we muſt uſe all the meanes of growth together with the promiſe: for in the things of this life, if a man were aſſured that the next yeare would be a very plentifull yeare; would men therefore becauſe they were thus forewarned, hang up their plowes, and not prepare their ground, no, but they would the rather be encouraged to take paines, becauſe they know that howſoever God be pleaſed to vouchſafe plenty, yet he will doe it in the uſe of meanes, obſerving and depending on his Providence. So when he hath made gratious promiſes of the *Dew* of his Grace, and of growth as *Lillies*, &c. This implyeth a ſubordinate

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ordinate ſerving of his gratious Providence, therefore it is a way to ſtirre us up unto the uſe of all meanes rather, and not to take us off from them. Even as God when hee told the Iſraelites: *I will give you the land of Canaan*, did onely promiſe it, leaving the remainder to their conqueſt in the uſe of meanes. Should this have made them caſt away their ſwords? No, but it was that they might fight, and fight the more couragiouſly. So when God hath promiſed growth in Grace, ſhould this make us careleſſe? O no, it ſhould make us more diligent and carefull, and comforts us in the uſe of meanes, knowing that our labour ſhall not be in vaine in the Lord. Now Lord I know I ſhall not looſe my labour in hearing, in receiving of the Sacrament, in the communion of Saints, and uſe of ſanctified meanes; for thou haſt made a gratious promiſe, that *I ſhall grow as the Lillie*, and that thou wilt be *as the dew unto mee*; therefore make thy good worke begun, effectually unto my poore ſoule, that it may flouriſh and be refreſhed as a watered garden. But there are ſeverall ſorts of growth formerly touched, either

Gen. 17. 8.

1 Cor. 15. 58.

1. *A growing upward*, or
2. *A growing in the roote*, or
3. *A Spreading and growing in the Fruit, and Sweetneſſe.*

Therefore Chriſtians muſt not alwayes looke to have their growth in one and the ſame place, but muſt wiſely conſider of Gods prudent dealing

dealing with his children in this kind, as will be further ſeene hereafter in the particulars.

He ſhall caſt forth his rootes as Lebanon.

That is, He ſhall caſt and ſpread, and ſo put forth his rootes as *Lebanon*: he ſhall grow upward and downeward; in regard of firmeneſſe he ſhall be more rooted. In what proportion Trees grow upwards, in that proportion they take roote downewards: becauſe otherwiſe, they may be top heavy and overturne, a blaſt of winde taking advantage of their talneſſe and weakeneſſe to roote them out the ſooner: therefore proportionable to their ſpreading above, there muſt be a rooting in the ground. As the Prophet ſpeakes to *Hezekiah* of Gods people, *And the remnant that is eſcaped of the houſe of Iudah, ſhall yet againe take roote downeward and beare fruit upward.* There muſt be firmeneſſe in the roote, as well as growth in the branches, for which cauſe, God here promiſeth to the Church and every Chriſtian, ſtability and fixedneſſe, that as hee groweth upward like the *Lillie*, ſo he ſhould grow downward, firme and ſtrong. 2 King. 19. 30.

Now whence comes this rootedneſſe and firme ſtability of Gods Children? *Queſt.*

Eſpecially from this, that they are now in the Covenant of grace, rooted in Chriſt who is God-man, in whom they are firmely rooted. In *Adam* wee had a roote of our owne, but now our roote is in Chriſt. All grace is firſt powred into Chriſts bleſſed Nature, and then at *Anſw.* *The cauſe of the Saints ſtability.* Joh. 1. 16.

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at a ſecond hand, *out of his fullneſſe we all receive grace for grace.* Being rooted in Chriſt we become firme, for there is in him an everlaſting marriage and union. *The Roote beareth us, wee beare not the roote:* Chriſt beareth us, wee beare not him. So now in the covenant of grace, all the firmeneſſe is out of us. Even as ſalvation it ſelfe was wrought out of us by a Mediatour; ſo it is kept by a Mediatour out of us: all goodneſſe, grace and favour of God to us is not in us but in Chriſt, but it is ſo out of us as Chriſt and we are one. But now we onely ſpeake of the cauſe of our firmeneſſe and ſtability, that becauſe we are in the ſtate of grace, we have an everlaſting firmeneſſe as we are in Chriſt Jeſus. God now making a ſecond covenant, he will not have it diſanulled as the firſt was, for his ſecond workes are better then his firſt. His firſt Covenant was, *Doe this and live,* but his ſecond is, *Beleeve this and live:* So as howſoever our ſtate in grace be but little, yet it is of a bleſſed, growing, ſpreading, firme nature, ſo ſure, as what is begun in grace, will end in glory, where God gives the firſt fruits, he will give tenths, yea the full harveſt and all. Becauſe by the covenant of grace, we are one with Chriſt, who is an everlaſting Head that never dyes. Sub-ſervant to this now wee have promiſed in the covenant of grace, That we ſhall never depart from him, and that he will never depart from us to doe us good, he puts an awband into our hearts, that we ſhall never

Rom. 11. 18.

Levit. 18. 5.

Rom. 10. 5.

never depart from him: but this Point being often touched, leaving it, we will come to anſwer ſome objections. Sect. VII.

It may ſeeme that theſe things are not ſo, Gods Children doe not alwayes grow and ſpread themſelves: but they are often overturned and fall. *Object.* 1.

This is nothing, they are mooved, but not remooved: they are as Mount Zion which cannot be remooved, but abideth for ever: which though it may be ſhaken with earthquakes, yet it is not remooved thereby. The gates of Hell, and ſorrowes of death may ſet ſore upon them, but not prevaile againſt them, they may fall, but not fall away, they may be as a werber-beaten tree, but not as a tree puld up by the rootes: therefore they are compared here to a tree whoſe roote ſtands faſt ſtill. This much the Church after a ſore tryall and endurance of much affliction confeſſeth. *All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee: neither have we dealt falſly in thy covenant: our heart is not turned backe, neither have our ſteps declined from thy way, though thou haſt broken us in the place of Dragons, and covered us with the ſhadow of death,* &c. *Anſw.* 1. Pſal. 125. 1. Mat. 16. 18. Pſal. 44. 17, 18, 19.

And againe, though they fall; yet they learne to ſtand faſt by their falls, are gainers by their loſſes, and become ſtronger by their weakneſſes: as tall Cedars, the more they are ſhaken by the winds, the more deepely they take rooting: So Chriſtians, the more ſtormes and blaſts

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blaſts they have, the more they are faſtly rooted: that which we thinke to be the overthrow of Gods children, doth but roote them deeper. As *Peter* after his fall tooke deeper rooting, and *David*, &c. ſo after all outward ſtormes and declinings, here is the fruit of all; they take deeper rooting, whilſt their ſinnes are purged away by their fiery afflictions. Iſa. 30.

Object. 2. But why then are they not more comfortable in their lives, in feeling and ſeeing of Gods wiſe ordering of things?

Anſw. 1. Firſt, becauſe though God worke ſtrongly and ſurely in them, yet he doth it for the moſt part ſlowly (as the Wiſeman ſpeakes) *all his workes being beautifull in time*: therefore they apprehend not their comforts as they ought, and ſo goe mourning the longer; the time of knitting divine experiences together not being yet come. Eccle. 3. 11.

2. Secondly, becauſe the anguiſh of the croſſe (if it bee quicke and ſharpe) many times takes away the apprehenſions of Gods excellent ends in the ſame: as the children of Iſraell could not hearken unto *Moſes* for anguiſh and vexation of ſpirit: *No affliction* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *for the preſent is joyous*, though afterwards it brings forth the quiet fruit of Righteouſneſſe. Exod. 6. 9. Heb. 12. 11.

3. Then againe *Satans malice*, who caſts in floods of temptations, is great: ſo that the ſoule cannot enjoy that ſweet tranquillity and peace it otherwiſe might, caſting in doubts and numbers of what-ifs into the ſoule: ſo that for

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for a time, he causes a strong diversion in them, whence after that, there followeth peace againe, when those temptations are seene and overcome.

4. *It is long also of our selves,* who are not armed for crosses and afflictions, untill we are suddenly surprized by them; and then leaving our watchfullnesse, and forgetting our consolation, we are struck downe for the present by them, and cannot support our selves against them.

5. And lastly, *It comes also from Gods wise ordering and dispesing Providence,* who will not do all at once: our comforts must come by degrees, now a little and then a little: our experience, and so our comforts come together, after we have honoured God in dependance upon his will and pleasure; and yet this hinders not, but a Christian growes still though hee be for the present insensible of it: as a man is alive and growes whilst he sleepes, though he be not sensible of it. Other objections have beene formerly touched.

He shall cast forth his rootes as Lebanon.

The difference of the godly and wicked, the one having a foundation, the other none.

We see then that the state of Gods children is a firme and a stable condition, whence we may observe the difference betwixt Gods people and others. Gods people are rooted and spread their roote. But the other have rottennesse in their roote, being cursed without any foundation. For take a man who is not a good Christian, where is his founda ion? onely in the things of this world. Now all heere is vanity, and

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and we our ſelves by truſting vanity become vaine; *Every man in his beſt eſtate, is altogether vanity*; vanity in himſelfe, and truſts in vanity. What ſtableneſſe can there be in vanity? Can a man *ſtare non ſtante*? ſtand in a thing that ſtands not in it ſelfe? Will a picture continue that is drawne upon the Ice? will it not faile and melt away when the Ice upon which it is drawne thawes? So all theſe who have not the dew of Gods grace, they are as a picture upon the water, have no foundation, and ſtand upon that which cannot ſtand it ſelfe. Therefore the Scripture compareth them to the worſt of graſſe, which hath no good roote, graſſe upon the houſe top, which hath no bleſſing of thoſe that come by, but there ſtands perking up above others. So it is with men that have no grace, they can perke up above others: but as they have no ſtable roote, nor the bleſſing of Gods people, ſtability with the Spirit of God inwardly, and the prayers of Gods people to water and bleſſe them: ſo they periſh and wither quickly. Nay whole nations (if wicked) have no foundation. What is become of the great Monarchies of the world? The *Aſſyrian*, *Perſian*, *Grecian* and *Romane* Monarchies? and for *Cities* themſelves, they have died like men, and had their periods. Onely a Chriſtian hath a Kingdome, a ſtable condition which cannot be ſhaken: he takes his roote ſtrongly, and growes ſtronger and ſtronger till he growes to Heaven, nay indeed while he lives hee is rooted in Heaven before his time, for though

Pſal. 62. 9.

Pſal. 129. 6.

Heb 12. 28. *That a Chriſtian is firme and ſtable, becauſe his roote is in Heaven.*

though we be in Earth we are rooted in Heaven: Christ our roote is in Heaven, and his Faith which is wrought from Heaven, carrieth us to Christ in Heaven, and love that grace of union following the union of Faith, carrieth us to Christ also: even before our time, we are there in *Faith*, *Love* and *Joy*. Therefore a poore Christian is firme and stable even in this life, having union with Christ, though he creepe upon the earth and seeme a despised person, yet his roote is in Heaven, where he hath union with Christ; *His life is hid with God in Christ*: who *when he shall appeare*, hee shall appeare with him likewise in glory. Therefore, if Christ be firme, the estate of a Christian must needs be firme: For he is a Cedar, another man is as grasse or corne upon the house top, *All flesh is grasse*, saith the Prophet. *Object.* But they have wit and memory, and parts, &c. yet they are but as the flower of the grasse, perhaps better then ordinary grasse, but the grasse withereth, and the flower fadeth: what continueth then? *O the word of the Lord*, and comfort and grace by that word, *endures for ever*, and makes us endure for ever. This is excellently set downe by the Prophet *David*, we see there the righteous man is compared to a tree planted by the water side, his leafe failes not. So a Christian is planted in Christ, he is still on the growing hand, and his leafe shall not wither, *Those who are planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the Courts of our God, They shall still bring*

Coloss. 3. 3, 4.

Isa 40.6.

Psal. 1. 3.

Psal 92. 13.

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fruit in their old age, they ſhall be fat and flouriſhing, they ſhall grow like a Cedar in Lebanon.

Vſe. 1. *A comfort from the firmneſſe of our condition.*

This cleare difference, ſhould ſtirre us up to be comforted in our condition, which is firme and ſtable. Why doe we value chriſtall above glaſſe? Becauſe it is brighter, and of more continuance. Why doe we value continuing things, inheritances above annuities? Becauſe they continue. If by the ſtrength of our diſcourſe we value things anſwerable to their laſting; why ſhould we not value the beſt things? our eſtate in grace, this is a laſting condition, for a Chriſtian is like a *Cedar*, that is rooted, and takes deeper and deeper root, and never leaves growing till he grow to Heaven: *He ſhall caſt forth his rootes as Lebanon.*

Vſe 2.

Againe, let all them make Uſe of it, that find not the worke of grace upon their hearts. O! let them conſider what a fading condition they are in, they thinke they can doe great matters, perhaps they have a deſtructive power, they labour to doe miſchiefe, to cruſh whom they will in this world. But what is all this, we ſee what the Pſalmiſt ſaith of a *Doeg*, a curſed man, who had a deſtroying power. *Why boaſteſt thou thy ſelfe in miſchiefe O mighty man? the goodneſſe of God endureth continually.* Why boaſteſt thou thy ſelfe that thou canſt doe miſchiefe and overturne Gods people? &c. Know this that the good will of God continues. Boaſt not thy ſelfe, thy tongue deviſeſt miſchiefe, as a ſharpe razor, God ſhall deſtroy thee forever.

Pſal. 52. 1.

Hee

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He shall cast thee away and pull thee out of thy dwelling, and root thee out of the Land of the living. Those men that rejoyce in a destructive power, in their ability to doe mischiefe, and exercising of that ability all they can, they shall be pluckt out of their place, and rooted out of the land of the living. And as it is in *Iob*, they shall be hurled away as a man hurles a stone out of a sling. Then what shall the righteous say? they shall see and feare, and say: *Loe this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himselfe in wickednesse.* He thought to roote himselfe so fast that he should never bee removed, but at the last it shall come to passe, that all that see him shall say: loe, see, what is become of him? this is the man, that trusted in his riches and made not God his strength, what is become of him? saith *David* of himself, *I am like a greene Olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.* Let them trust if they will in Riches, Power, Strength, and Favour with *Saul* and great men, yet notwithstanding be *Doeg* what he will, *I shall be a green Olive planted in the house of God, &c.*

Job 27.21.

Psal. 52 7.

Psal. 52.8.

So heere is a double use the Scripture makes of these things. 1. The godly man rejoyceth in his condition, and 2. Other men feare and grow wise not to trust to their fading condition. They are (as the Prophet speakes) *as a bay tree* that flourishes for a time, and then after come to nothing, *their place is no where found.* They

Psal. 37.35.

keepe a great deale of doe in the world for a time, but afterwards, where is such an ones their place is no where found, no where comfortably, they have a place in Hell, but comfortably a place no where. This is the estate of all those who have not a good roote, for saith Christ, *Every plant that my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up.* It is true of every condition and of every man, if God have not planted him in that excellent state, or doe not in time, he shall be rooted up: for the time will come that the Earth will hold him no longer, he rootes himselfe now in the earth, which then shall cast him out. He cannot stay here long, Heaven will not receive him, then Hell must. What a miserable thing is this, when wee place and bottome our selves upon things that will not last? when our selves shall out-last our foundation? when a man shall live for ever and that which he builds on is fading, what extreamity of folly is this? to build on Riches, Favour, Greatnesse, Power, Inheritance, which either must bee taken from him, or hee from them, he knoweth not how soone.

Mat. 15. 13.

What makes a man miserable, but the disappointing of his hopes, and crossing of his affections? Now when a man pitcheth his soule too much upon his worldly things, from which there must be a parting, this is as if it were the rending of the skinne from the flesh, and the flesh from the bones, when a mans soule is rent from that he pitcheth his happinesse on, this

maketh

maketh a man miſerable: for miſery is in diſappointing the hopes and croſſing the affections. Now onely a Chriſtian plants his heart and affections on that which is everlaſting, of equall continuance with his ſoule: As hee ſhall live for ever, ſo hee is rooted for ever in that which muſt make him everlaſtingly happy. Theſe things wee heare, and they are undeniable true, but how few make uſe of them to deſiſt from going on in a plodding ſwelling deſire of an earthly condition to over-top other men? ſuch labour to grow in tauleneſſe and height, but ſtrive not to be rooted. Now that which grows perking up in height, over-topping other things, yet without root, what will become of it? It will be turned up by the Roots.

How to be rooted in Grace.

Now, How ſhall we grow to be rooted? For to attain hereunto, it is not onely neceſſary to apply the promiſes and challeng God with them, but to conſider alſo what wayes hee will make them good.

1. To know Gods free grace.

First, Labour to know God and his free Grace in Jeſus Chriſt: *Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*: they goe both together: the more we grow in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and of the Grace of God in him, the more grace and rootedneſſe we ſhall have. For that which the ſoule doth cleerely apprehend, it faſtens upon in that meaſure it apprehendeth it. Cleereneſſe in the underſtanding breeds earneſtneſſe in the affections, and faſtneſſe too. So the more wee grow

2 Pet. 3. 18.

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in knowledge, the more wee roote our selves in that we know. And therefore the Apostle prayes for the *Ephesians*, that they might have the Spirit of Revelation, &c. That they might know the height, breadth, depth and length of Gods love, that passeth knowledge, *Ephes.* 3.14. *For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Iesus Christ, of whom the whole family of Heaven and Earth is named: that he would grant you according to the riches of his Glory, to be strengthened by his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye being rooted and grounded in love,* in the sense of Gods love to us, and so of our love to him againe (for we are not rooted in love to God, till wee be rooted in the sense of Gods love to us) *that you may be able to comprehend with all Saints, the height and breadth, &c.*

2. *Labour to know the Promises.*

2 Cor. 1.20.

And withall, labour to know the gratious Promises of Christ, for we are knit to him by virtue of his word and Promises: which like himselfe are *Yea and Amen.* JEHOVAH yesterday, to day, and the same for ever. So all his Promises made in him, they are *Yea and Amen*, in themselves firme, and firme to us in him. They are *Yea and Amen*: that is, they are made and performed in Christ, in whom they are sure to be performed, and thereupon they are firme too. God made them, who is JEHOVAH, and they are made in Christ that is JEHOVAH. So God the Father JEHOVAH, he promiseth, and he makes them good in Christ JEHOVAH, who is unchangeable.

But

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But this is not enough, wee must labour to have our hearts stablished, that they may rely firmely on that which is firme. For if a thing be never so firme, except we rely firmely on it, there is no stability or strength from it. Now when there is strength in the thing, and strength in the soule, that strength is impregnable and unconquerable strength. In Christ they are Yea and Amen, in whom he stablisheth us, annoints us, seales us, and gives us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

3. *Our hearts must be stablished on that which is firme.*

How doth God stablish us upon the Promises? The rest which followeth is an explication of this, when he gives us the earnest of the Spirit, and seales us to be his, in token he meanes to make good the bargaine, then we are established. But we are never firmely established, till we get the assurance of salvation. Then as the Promises are Yea and Amen in themselves, so we are stablished upon them, when wee are sealed and have the earnest of the Spirit. Let us labour therefore to grow in the knowledge of Gods love in Christ, to know the height, breadth, depth, and length of it, and to grow in all the gratious promises which are made in Christ, who is Amen himselfe, as his promises are, and then when wee are sealed and annointed by the Spirit, we shall be so stablished that nothing shall moove us. Therefore let us use all meanes for the establishing of growth in us, the Word and Sacraments especially. For as Baptisme admits us into the house

How God doth stablish us.

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of God, so by the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, the blessed food of the soule, we are strengthened. In the use of these meanes, let us make suit unto God to make good his gratious Promise unto us, that we shall grow as *Lillies*, and take root, as *the Cedars in Lebanon*.

Let us know that wee ought every day to labour to be more and more rooted: do we know what times may befall us? Wee have need to grow every day, to grow upward, and in breadth and in depth. If we considered what times wee may live to, it should force us to grow every way, especially in humility, that root and mother of graces, to grow downeward in that, to grow in knowledge and faith untill we be filled with the fulnesse of God.

Object. A poore Christian oft times makes this Objection, O, I doe not grow, therefore I feare my state, I am oft shaken, therefore this Promise is not fulfilled to me.

Answ. To this I answer, Christians may bee deceived, for they do grow oft times in firmenesse, strength and stability, though they doe not spread out; they may grow in refinednesse, that that which comes from them may bee more pure, and lesse mixed with naturall corruption, Pride, Selfe-love and the like. This is a temptation that old men are subject too especially, in whom the heat of nature decayes, who thinke withall that grace decayes. But it is not so, for oft times when grace is carried with the heate of nature, it makes a greater

shew

ſhew being helpt by nature. The demonſtration, but not the truth of grace is thus helpt. Therfore this clauſe of the Promiſe is made good in old Chriſtians, they are every day more and more rooted, firme, ſtable and judicious, and more able in thoſe graces which belong to their place and condition. Therefore, they ſhould not be diſcouraged, though they be not carried vvith the ſtreame and tide of nature, help'd vvith that vigour that ſometime vvas in them. They grow in judiciouſneſſe, mortifiedneſſe, in heavenly-mindedneſſe, and in ability to give good counſell to others. This is vvell, for we grow not in grace one vvay, but divers vvayes; not onely when we grow in outward demonſtration, and in many fruits and actions; but when we grow in refinedneſſe and judiciouſneſſe (as vvas ſaid) then vve are ſaid to grow likewiſe. Sax. VII.

Yet notwithſtanding, it ſhould be the indeavour of all to grow vvhat they can in grace, vvhen if they grow not ſo faſt as others, let them know that there are ſeverall ages in Chriſt. A young Chriſtian cannot be ſo planted and ſo deepely rooted as another that is of a greater ſtanding. This ſhould not diſcourage any, ſeeing there are babes in Chriſt, as well as ſtrong men. Therefore where there is truth of heart, with indeavour to grow better and better, and to uſe all meanes, let no man bee diſcouraged. Remember alway this for a truth, that vve may grow, and we ought to grow, and the children of God ordinarily have growne more

more and more, both in fruitfulneſſe and ſtedfaſtneſſe every way, but not with a like growth in meaſure or time. Therefore labour to make uſe of theſe promiſes, and not to favour our ſelves in an ungrowing eſtate, for grace is of a growing nature. If it grow not in fruitfulneſſe, yet it growes in the Roote; as a plant ſometimes growes in fruitfulneſſe, ſometimes in the Roote. There is more vertue in Winter time in the Roote, then in the fruit which is gone. So a Chriſtian groweth one vvay if not another: though not in outward demonſtration, yet in Humiliation. God ſometimes ſees it neceſſary, that our branches ſhould not ſpread for a vvhile; but that vve ſhould grow in Humility, by ſome faults and ſins we fall and ſlip into, that vve may ſee our own vveakneſſe and looke up.

Let us labour therfore who have ſo long enjoyed ſuch ſtore of bleſſed meanes, under the dew of Gods grace and the influence of his Spirit, in the Paradice of God, his Houſe and Church, having ſo long lived in this *Eden*, let us labour now to ſpread, and grow in fruitfulneſſe, that ſo we may be filled with the fulneſſe of God. It is the chiefe thing of all to be rooted and grow in grace. You ſee, God when he vvould ſingle out a bleſſing, he tels them not that they ſhall grow rich, that they ſhall ſpread out and grow rich in the vvorld. No, but you vvhom I love freely, take this as a fruit of it, *You ſhall grow as the Lilly*, you ſhall grow fruitfull *as the Olive*, &c. This is the comfort of a Chriſtian

ſtian, though he growes downeward oft in the world, and things of this naturall life, yet hee growes upward in another condition, as *Lillies* and *Cedars*, they grow downewards one vvay, but they grow upwards another. Perhaps they may decay in their ſtate and favour, and in their practiſe and cunning in this life: but a Chriſtian, if he be in the uſe of right meanes, and put in ſute the gratious Promiſes, he is ſure ſtill to grow in *Grace*, in *Faith* and *Love*, and in the inner man.

Is not this a comfort, that a Chriſtian hath a comfortable meditation of the time to come in all his croſſes? That it is for better and better ſtill: that as in time he is neerer Heaven, ſo he ſhall be fitter and fitter, and neerer and neerer ſtill with a diſpoſition ſuitable to the place. That the time to come is the beſt time, and that he ſhall grow every way, in height, in bredth, in depth and length, and apprehenſion of Gods love: and that the more hee growes in knowledge of theſe things, the more he ſhall grow in all dimenſions, being as ſure of things to come, as of things paſt: And that neither things preſent nor to come, ſhall ever ſeperate him from the love of God in Chriſt. What a comfortable ſtate is a Chriſtian in, who is alwayes on the mending hand, that is ſuch a childe of hope, when the hope of the wicked ſhall periſh? Let us labour therefore, that we may be in ſuch a caſe and ſtate of ſoule, as that thoughts of the time to come may be comfortable: that when vve thinke we muſt be tranſplanted hence out of the

the Paradice and Eden of Gods Church, into a heavenly Paradice, that all our changes ſhall be for the better. What a fearfull thing is it to be in the ſtate of nature? What foundation hath a man in that eſtate, who hath no roote here, and that roote he hath will faile him ere longe How fearefull is it for ſuch a man to think of a change, when it is not a change for the better?

Here is wiſdome, if we will be wiſe to purpoſe, let us be wiſe this way, labour in the firſt place, to prize Gods favours, and to know how to come by them in the uſe of all means. Look to God for the performance of theſe gratious promiſes: for they are not of what we ſhall doe in our ſelves; but what God will do in the Covenant of grace: And if a Chriſtian ſhould not bee rooted and grow ſtronger and ſtronger, we ſhould not faile, but God and Chriſt ſhould faile, who is our roote and beares us up. Therfore God hath taken upon him the performance of all theſe things; what remaineth from us, but a carefull uſing of all means; and in the uſe of all, a going out of our ſelves to God, that he would be *as the dew to us*, and cauſe us by the dew of his Spirit to grow more and more rooted in grace as long as wee live in this world; and then our rooting and ſtability lies upon God, not upon us: he fails if we faile; who hath undertaken, that *we ſhall grow as the Lilly, and caſt forth our Rootes as Lebanon.*

The end of the ſeventh Sermon.

THE EIGTH SERMON.

Hos. 14. 6,7.

His branches shall spread, his beauty shall be as the Olive tree and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return, they shall revive as the Corne, and grow as the Vine, the scent thereof shall be as the Wine of Lebanon.

WE have heard at large heretofore what petitions God put into the heart and mouth of his Church: as also what gratious answer GOD gives his owne Petitions; Hee cannot deny the prayers made by his owne Spirit. And

And as hee is goodneſſe it ſelfe, ſo he ſhewes it in this, that hee goes beyond all that wee can deſire, thinke or ſpeake: his anſwer is more tranſcendent, as the Apoſtle ſpeakes: *hee does exceeding abundantly above all that we aske or thinke*, &c. For whereas they in particular and in briefe ſay, *Doe good to us, and receive us graciouſly*: He tels them, *He will bee as the Dew unto them:* and from thence, being *Dew* to them, is their ſpreading and growing as a *Lilly*, and caſting of their rootes as *Lebanon:* and *their branches ſhall ſpread*, &c. and all this to encourage us to come to ſo powerfull and large-hearted a God; who, as he is able to doe more then we deſire of him, ſo he will alſo doe it. *He will be as the Dew unto us.* This is the generall of all, for all other fruitfulneſſe comes from this. 1. *God will bee as the Dew*, and then 2. *They ſhall grow as the Lilly, and caſt their Roots as the Cedars in Lebanon*, they ſhall not onely grow upward but downward, for the *Lillie* quickly ſpreads it ſelfe forth: but they ſhall be like the trees of *Lebanon* for ſtedfaſtneſſe; and then ſpread in breadth, grow in all dimenſions. Which is fulfilled of the Church in generall, and of every particular Chriſtian when once he is in Chriſt, uſing ſanctified means: they grow then in the root, and upright, and in every dimenſion: *His branches ſhall ſpread*, and then

Ephel. 3. 19.

His beauty ſhall be as the Olive tree.

Which though fruitefull and excellent, yet becauſe

because it hath no sweet smell, it is added
His smell shall be as Lebanon.

These excellencies promised to the Church of God, are not all in one tree, but yet they are in some sort in every Christian, what agrees not all to one plant, agrees to the *plants of Righteousnesse*; they grow upwards and downewards, spread and are savoury and fruitfull: all agrees to a tree of Righteousnesse. We say of man he is a little world, a compendium of this great world, as indeed there is a compassing of all the excellencies of the world in man; for he hath a being with those creatures who have onely that, and therewith he hath growing, sense and reason, wherby he hath communion with God and those understanding Spirits the Angels: so that hee is as it were a summe of all the excellencies of the creatures, a little world indeed. The great world hath nothing, but the little world hath the same in some proportion. So it is in Grace: a Christian hath all excellencies in him that are in the world: There is not an excellency in any thing, but is in an higher kinde in a Christian. He hath the beauty of the *Lilies*, and he growes up in spreading, smell and fruitfulnesse; his wisedome exceeds that of all the creatures: there is not an excellency in nature, but wee have some proportionable excellency in grace which is above it. God useth these outward things to help us, that we should doe both body and soule good by the creatures. Whatsoever doth

our

our bodies good, either by necessity or delight they help our soules: as plants and trees, not only refresh the outward man, and the senses, but also they teach our soules, as here the Holy Ghost teacheth them by outward things. First it is said,

His branches shall spread.

When God enriches the soule with saving grace, one shall grow every way and flourish abundantly, extending forth their goodnesse on every side largely to the knowledge and open view of others, and then further,

His beauty shall be as the olive tree.

What is the beauty of the Olive tree? to be usefull, fruitfull, and to bring forth good fruit. Indeed the glory of a tree is to be loaden with fruit, and usefull fruit, which is the best property of fruite to be usefull and delightfull. So the glory of a Christian, who is a plant of righteousnesse, of Gods own planting, is to abound in fruits of Righteousnesse. Indeed the Olive is a very fruitfull tree, and the oyle which comes and distils from it hath many excellent properties agreeing to graces.

I. *How the fruitfulnesse of the Olive is compared to divers graces.*

Amongst the rest, it is a Royall kinde of liquor, that will be above the rest: so grace it commands all other things, it gives a sanctified use of the creature and subdues all corruption.

2.

And then it is unmixed, it will mingle with nothing; light and darknesse will not mingle, no more will grace and corruption, for the one is hostile to the other, as *Salomon* speakes, *The Iust is abomination to the wicked.*

Further,

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Further, It is sweet, strengthning and feeding the life: as in *Zacharie*, there is mention made of two Olives before the Lord, which feede the two candlesticks. And Olives of Grace, have alwayes fatnesse distilling from Christ to feed his lamp with oyle, Gods Church hath alwayes oyle: and those that are Olives, they keepe the Church by their particular calling. Zach. 4 3.

1. *He shall be fruitfull as the Olive*, and
2. *Abundant in fruit as the Olive.*
3. *Constant in fruit, like the Olive.*

For it beares fruit much, and never failes, no not in winter: and hath a perpetuall greennesse. Indeed the child of God hath a perpetuall verdor: as it is, *Psal. 1. his leafe never fades*: Because that which is the cause of flourishing never failes him. Which causes are two, Psal. 1. 3.

1. *Moysture*,
2. *Heate*.

For we know *Moysture* and *Heate*, these two are the causes of all kindly growth. If a tree have more moysture then heate, then it is waterish, if it have more heate then moysture, then there is no bignesse in the fruit. So true it is, that *moysture* and *heate* are the causes of fruitfullnesse, in a good proportion. So Gods children, having the Sonne of Righteousnesse alwayes shining upon them, and being alwayes under the *Dew* of grace (the promise being, *to be as the Dew to Israel*) having all *Dew* to fall upon them for *moysture*: and having the Sonne of Righteousnesse to shine upon them to make them *Causes of the perpetuall flourishing of the Saints.*

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them fruitfull, their leafe never faileth, they never give over bringing forth fruit: becauſe they have in them cauſes perpetuating fruitfulnes, though not alike. Becauſe Chriſt by his Spirit is a voluntary, and not a naturall cauſe of their fruitfulnes. That is, he is ſuch a cauſe as workes ſometimes more and ſometimes leſſe, to ſhew that grace ſprings not from our ſelves, and to acquaint us with our own weaknes and inſufficiency. Heaven

1 Pet. 1. 4. is the perfection of all both Graces and Comforts. Wherfore *Peter* calls the ſtate of Heaven, *an inheritance, immortall and undefiled, that fades not away*: Why is that an eſtate of grace and comfort more then this of this world? Becauſe it is a never fading eſtate, there they are alway in one tenure, and becauſe Chriſt ſhewes himſelf alway there, there is abundance of water to moyſten them, and heat to cheriſh them. There is no intermingling or ſtopping in growth as is here; therefore it is an inheritance that fadeth not away, having the ſupply of a perpetuall cauſe of flouriſhing.

This in ſome degree is true of the Church on earth, it is the inheritance of God that fades not, and Chriſtians therein are Olives that bring foorth fruit conſtantly, having a perpetuall

Pſal. 92. 12. freſhneſſe and greeneſſe. So the Righteous man is compared to the *Cedars of Lebanon*, which bring forth much fruit in their age: he ſhall be fruitfull as the Olive, from all which this point formerly touched followeth.

Obſerv. *That it is the excellency and glory of a Chriſtian, to be fruitfull in his place.*

Both

Both to be fruitfull in his place as a Christian, and in his particular calling. To be fruitfull as a Magistrate, as a Minister, as a governour of a family, as a neighbour, as a friend, to be fruitfull in all. Because in Religion every neere relation is as it were a joyning together of the body of Christ one to another, by which some good is derived from one to another. God uses these relations as conduits to convey graces. A good Christian, the meanest of them is a good neighbour, and doth a great deale of good, being fruitfull as a neighbour, fruitfull as a friend, much more as a husband, as a Magistrate, as a Minister. These relations are a knitting to Christ, by which fatnesse and sap is derived from the head for the good of the whole body. Therefore a Christian in all relations is fruitfull. When he comes to be a Christian, he considers like good *Mordecai*, what good he may doe: as he told *Hester, What if thou be called to the kingdome for this purpose:* So a Christian will reason with himselfe, what if I be called to be a Magistrate or a Minister for this purpose? what if I be called to be a friend for such or such a purpose: to doe this or this good? indeed such are gratious Quæres made to a mans soule, to enquire for what purpose hath God raised me? to doe this or that. To be idle, or barren, or noysome, O no, to be a plant of Gods planting: my glory shall be my fruitfullnesse in my place. Hest. 4. 14.

Therefore let us every one consider with our selves, wherefore God hath set us in the Church

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in our particular ſtandings. Wherein let us remember this, that howſoever God may endure barrenneſſe out of the Church in want of meanes; yet he will never indure it under meanes. It is better for a bramble to be in the Wilderneſſe then in an Orchard; for a weed to bee abroad, then in a garden where it is ſure to bee weeded out, as the other to be cut downe. If a man will be unprofitable, let him bee unprofitable out of the Church: but to be ſo where he hath the dew of grace falling on him, in the meanes of ſalvation, where are all Gods ſweet favours; to bee a bramble in the Orchard, to bee a weed in the Garden, to be noyſome in a place where wee ſhould be fruitfull, will God the great Husbandman indure this? Hee will not long put it up; but that he exerciſeth his children with ſuch noyſome trees to trie them, as hee hath ſome ſervice for theſe thornes to doe, to ſcratch them: ſo were it not for ſuch like ſervices for a time, he would weed them out and burne them, for whatſoever is not for fruit, is for the fire: *Yea, every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, ſhall be hewen downe and caſt into the fire.*

Mat. 3. 10.

And the more to ſtirre us up hereunto, let us know that whereſoever the *dew* of grace falls, and where there is the meanes of ſalvation, that at that very time, there is an axe, an inſtrument of vengeance laid to the roote of the tree, which is not ſtruck downe preſently, but *it is laid to the roote*, that is, vengeance is threatned

to

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the tree, to that plane which hath the meanes, and brings not forth good fruit in time and season. What is the end thereof? to be hewen down and cast into the fier. As we see the Church of the *Iewes*, when Christ came, the *Messias*, the great Prophet of the Church, never was there more meanes of salvation: yet even then, what saith *Iohn Baptist*, *Now, even now, is the axe laid unto the roote of the tree*; and indeed in a few yeares after, the whole tree, the Church of the *Iewes* was cut downe. And *Rev 6.* we see, after the Rider on the *white Horse*, which is the preaching of the *Gospell*, there comes a *red bloodie Horse*, and a *pale Horse*: *Warre* and *Famine*. After the *white Horse*, his triumphant Chariot, the preaching of the Gospell: if this take not place, that it winne and gaine not: what followes after? the red and the pale Horse, Warre, Famine, and Destruction. It will not be alway with us as it is; for the Gospell having beene so long preached, we having beene so long planted in Gods Paradice, the Church: if we bear not fruit, *The axe is laid to the roote of the tree*? God will strike at the roote, and roote up all, therefore let every one in their place be fruitfull.

Every one that is fruitfull, God hath a speciall care of. If any tree were fruitfull, the *Israelites* in their conquest were to spare that, because it was usefull, and they might have use of it. So God will alwayes spare fruitfull trees, and have a speciall care of such in common calamities. Let us therefore be exhorted not on-

The Benefit of fruitfullnesse. Deu. 20. 19, 20

ly to bring forth fruit, but to bring forth fruit in abundance, to studie to excell in good works, the word in the Originall is, *A Standerd-bearer*: to stand before others in good workes. As it is in Titus, labour to be as *Standerd-bearers*, to goe before others in good works: strive to outgoe others in fruitfulnes; for therein is the excellency. For those both in the sight of God and men are in most esteeme, who are most fruitfull in their callings and places. The more we excell in fruitfullnesse, the more we excell in comfort: and the more we excell this way, the more we may excell: for God will tend and prune good trees, that they may bring forth more and better fruit. And the more majesty we walke with, the more we dampe the enemies, seeing them all under our feete; a growing Christian never wants abundance of incouragements, for he sees such grounds of comfort, as that he walkes impregnable and invincible in all the discouragements of this world, breaking through all; as *Salomon* saith, it is a comely thing to see a Lyon walke: so much more it is to see a valiant, strong, well-growen Christian, (who is bold as a Lyon) abound in good workes.

Titus 3.8.

Ioh. 15. 2.

Pro. 30. 30.

It is said, *His beauty shall bee as the Olive and his smell as Lebanon*: the Olive of it selfe hath no sweet smell, therefore it is made up by another resemblance.

His smell shall be as Lebanon.

Lebanon stood on the North side of *Iudea*, and was a place abounding with goodly trees,

and

and all sweet plants whatsoever, which cast a wondrous sweet sent and smell a farre off: as some Countries abound so in sweet fruits and simples, as Oranges, Lemmons and the like, that the fragrancie of the smell is smelt of passengers as they saile along the Coast. So was this *Lebanon* a place full of rare fruits and fragrant flowers, which cast a sent a farre of. Now, hence the Holy Ghost fetcheth the comparison; *They shall smell as Lebanon*: that is, as those plants in *Lebanon* which cast a sweet and delightfull smell a farre off, whence wee will onely observe this,

That a Christian by his fruitfulnesse doth delight others. *Observ.*

He is sweet to God and man, as the *Olive* and the *Vine* speake of their fruitfullnes, *They delight God and man.* So a Christian, both alive and dead, hee is pleasing and delightfull to the spirits of others, to God, and all that have the Spirit of God. As for God himselfe, wee know that workes of mercy are as it were a sweet odour, he is delighted with good works, as with Sacrifice, smelling a sweet savour from them, and their prayers ascend as sweet incense before him. Every good work is pleasing and delightfull to God, who dwels in an humble heart, and broken spirit. The upright are his delight. We see likewise how Christ commends the graces of his Church, which whole booke is full of praises in this kinde one of another. The Church sets out the praises of Christ, and Christ the praises of

Iud 9 9.13.

Phil.4.18.

Psal.141.2.

Pro.11.20.

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the Church. The Church is sweet, *O let me heare thy voice for it is sweet and lovely*; The Churches voice is sweet, praying to God or praising him. So whatsoever comes from the Spirit of God, in the hearts of his children is sweet, God laies to heart the voice of his children.

Cant. 2. 14.

And as it is true of God, so is it of Gods people, they are delighted with the savour of those things that come from other of Gods people. For they have graces in them, and therewith the Spirit of God which is as fire to set a worke all those graces in them. For it is the nature of fire where it incounters with sweet things, to kindle them and make them smell more fragrant and sweet. So a spirit of love makes all sweet and pleasing whatsoever in the children of God: it puts a gracefullnesse upon their words; making their reproofes, admonitions, comforts, and whatsoever comes from them, to have a delightfullnesse in them: because all is done in love, and comes from the Spirit of God, which carrieth a sweetnesse in it, to all those endowed with the same spirit.

Vse 1. Let this be an incouragement to be in love with the state of Gods children, that so our workes and whatsoever comes from us as farre as it is spirituall, may bee acceptable unto God, and to the Church while we are living, nay when we are dead. The very workes of holy men when they are dead, are as a box of oyntment, as the oyntment of the Apothecary, as the wise-man sayes of *Iosiah*, whose very name

name was like the ointment of the Apothecaries. So the name of those who have stood out for good, and have beene good in their times, it carries a sweetnesse with it when they are gone. The Church of God riseth out of the ashes of the Martyrs, which hitherto smels sweet and puts life in those who come after: so pretious are they both dead and alive.

And then, let it be an incouragement to be led by Gods Spirit, and planted in Gods house and to be fruitfull in our places, that so we may delight God and man, and when we are gone leave a good sent behind us. Good men, as it were with their good sent they leave behinde them, perfume the times, which are the better for them dead and alive. What a sweet savour hath *Paul* left behind him, by his writings to the Church, even to the end of the world? what fragrancie of delightfull smels have the holy antient Fathers and Martyrs left behinde them? a good man should be like the box of ointment spoken of in the Gospell, which when it was opened, the whole house was filled with the sweetnesse thereof, so a good man should labour to bee full of sweetnesse, willingnesse and abilities to doe good, all kindled by a spirit of love in him, that when he is opened, all should be pleasing and delightfull that commeth from him. Christ never opened his mouth but good came from him, and the Heavens never opened in vaine: therefore in opening of our mouthes, we should labour to fill

Vse 2.

Mat. 26.

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fill the places where we are with a good savour. O how contrary is this to the condition of many, what comes from them? filthy speeches and oaths, nay that which should be their shame they glory in. We see it is the glory of a tree to be fruitfull, and to cast forth a good savour, like the trees of *Lebanon*. What vile spirits then are such men led with all, who delight to offend God and man by their impious speeches? who yet are so bold as to shew their faces, to outdare others that are better then themselves: such are contrary to all Gods senses. The Scripture condescends so farre to our capacitie, as to attribute senses unto God, of feeling, smelling and touching, &c. So God is said to looke upon his children with delight, and to heare their prayers. *Let me heare thy voice*, &c. And he takes the fruit that comes from them. So on the contrary, all his senses are annoyed with wicked men and vile persons, who are abhominable to God, as the Scripture speakes. As a man that goes by a stinking dung-hill stops his nose and cannot endure the sent. So the blasphemous breath of graceless persons, it is abhominable to God, as it were, God cannot endure such an odious smell, and for his *eyes* he cannot endure iniquity, to looke upon the wicked, and for his *eares*, their prayers are abhominable, how abhominable then are their persons whence those prayers proceed? they have proud hearts hating God and man, wherefore praying out of necessity, not love to him, they

Cant. 2, 14.

Heb. 1, 13.

are

are abhominable. And so for *perfect* your sacrifices are a burthen unto me. I cannot beare them, and the Prophet complaineth that God was burthened and loaded under their sins, as a cart pressed till it be ready to breake under the sheaves. All his senses are offended with wicked men. This hardned wretches think not of that whilst God fils their bellies with good things, goe on in security, but the time will come when they shall know the truth of these things, what it is to lead an odious abhominable life, contrary to God and all good men. Hence we see what we should be, that we may give a sweet sent. *His smell shall be as Lebanon.*

Wicked men know this very well, that the lives, speeches and courses of good men for the most part are fruitfull beyond theirs, therefore what they can, they labour to cast aspersions upon them that they may not smell so sweet, so crying downe those who are better then themselves, that they may be the lesse ill thought of: and setting a price upon all things in themselves and their companions. Take me a knot of cursed companions, and they are the onely stout, the onely wise and learned men, all learning it must live and die with them: and all other men, though incomparable beyond them in abilities, in grace, in fruitfullnesse to doe good, they are no body. and this policie the Divell teacheth them. But this will not serve the turne, for God both in life, and after death will raise up the esteeme of such

who

Hos. 7. 12.

Amos. 2. 13.

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Pro. 10.7.

who have beene fruitfull, when *the memorie of the wicked shall rot*, and not be mentioned without a kind of loathing. Therefore let no man trust to this foolish policie, to cry downe all others that are better then themselves, thinking thereby themselves shall be better esteemed. This will not thee, for as all other things, so our good name is at Gods disposing. It is not in the world to take away the good name or acceptance of good people; for they shall have in spight of the world, a place in the hearts of Gods people, who are best able to judge. The next thing promised is,

They that dwell under his shadow shall returne.

The Holy Ghost it seemes cannot expresse in words and comparisons enough, the excellent condition of the Church and of the Children of God, when they are once brought into the state of Grace. The former words concerne the excellencie of the Children of God in themselves: and these the fruitfullnesse and goodnesse of them that are under them, who shall be brought into the families and places where they live. *They that dwell under his shadow*, under the shadow of Israell, *shall returne and revive as the corne: and grow as the Vine, &c.* For so it is most fitly meant of Israell. For formerly it is said, *I will be as the Dew unto Israell.* Originally it is meant of Christs shadow; but because whosoever dwells under the Churches shadow, dwels under Christs, therefore it is fitly

applyed

applyed to Iſraell: *They that dwell under Iſraels ſhadow ſhall returne.* What returning? Returne to God by Repentance, this is ſuppoſed: for thoſe that dwell in the Church of God, if they belong to God, by the helpe of good meanes they ſhall attaine to reformation and Repentance. But it is eſpecially meant of that which followes upon it, *They ſhall returne*; that is, they ſhall revive, as a mans ſpirits after a ſwound are ſaid to returne, and things after a ſeeming decay and deadneſſe are ſaid to be quickned and returne againe. So all that dwell under the ſhadow of Iſraell, they ſhall returne to God by Repentance: *They ſhall returne*, having a greater vigor and liveline ſſe, recovering that which they ſeem'd to have loſt before. Sect. VIII.

They that dwell under his ſhadow ſhall Returne.

When God will bleſſe any people hee will bleſſe all that belong to them, and are under them, becauſe they are bleſſed in bleſſing them, even as we are touched when our children are ſtricken: God ſtrikes the father in the child, the husband in the wife, the maſter in the ſervant, becauſe there is ſome relation and dependance betwixt them. As it is in ill, ſo it is in good, God bleſſeth the father in the child, the King in the ſubject, and the ſubject in the King, God bleſſeth one in another. And in bleſſing becauſe God loves the Church, all the friends of the Church are the better for it. They proſper that love the Church, though they be not Pſal. 122. 6.

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not members of it, all that bleſſe *Abraham* ſhall be bleſſed, though they be not actually good, yet if they wiſh him well, a bleſſing is promiſed. So when God bleſſeth a man to purpoſe, he bleſſeth all that belong to him, all that be under his ſhadow fare the better. The point to be handled is this,

Obſerv. *That the Church it ſelfe yeelds a ſhadow*, being ſhadowed it ſelfe by Chriſt, who ſpreads his wing over it. Now what is the uſe of a ſhadow.

1. *It is for a retiring place to reſt in.*

2. *It is for Defence againſt the extremitie of heate.*

3. *It is for Delight*, If the ſhades be good and wholeſome.

For as Philoſophers expreſſe the nature of trees, there be ſome trees which yeeld noyſome ſhadowes, ſome trees have a heavie noxious dangerous ſhadow, becauſe there comes a ſent from the tree (as Naturaliſts obſerve) which annoyes the braines. But he ſpeakes here of good trees. Iſraell is a tree that yeelds a ſhadow unto all, that is, all that are under Iſraell ſhall reſt quietly, and not be annoyed with the heate of Gods wrath and the like, they ſhall be delighted, having a ſweet refreſhing under the Church.

Pſal. 36. 7. God in Scripture is often ſaid to be a ſhadow, and his people to be under *the ſhadow of his wings*. But God and the Church are all one in this, for they that are under the Churches ſhadow, are under Gods ſhadow, for the Church

Church is Christs, and Christ Gods. Therefore to be under the Church, is to be under God, and to be in the Church, is to be under Gods protection. They both agree, as we see *Micah* 5.7. The Church is said to be *Dew*, because God bedewes the Church, and the Church bedewes others, and here the promise is, *I will be as the dew unto Israell*, Where the same name is attributed unto God. Christ is a *vine*, and the Church is a *vine*; Christ is a *Dew* and a shadow, so is the Church; because Christ communicates his excellencies to her, and she hers unto others. Therefore there can be no offence in applying this to the Church: which is the proper meaning of the place, for the Church is a shadow for rest and freedome from annoyance, unto all that come under her. Ioh. 15. 1.

To cleere this a little: what solace and rest doe men finde under the shadow of the Church. *Quest.*

There is a rest and a peace in the Church, for all things are at peace with the Church, even the very stones in the field, nothing can hurt the Children of the Church, *God will be and is a Sunne and shield unto them*; a shield to keepe off all ill, and a Sunne to conferre all good unto them. So his promise is to *Abraham*; *I will be thy Buckler and thine exceeding great reward* A *Buckler* to keepe ill from him, and *an exceeding great reward* for good. Therefore it is a sweet shadow to bee under the Church, where God is all in all to them, who makes all things worke for good unto them, even the greatest *Answ.* Iob. 5. 23. Psal 84. 11. Gen. 15. 1.

greatest evills. Now what a delightfull thing is it to have a resting place with them, which either suffer no ill, or God turnes all ill to their great good: where God is a *Sun* and a *shield*, a *Buckler*, and an *exceeding great reward*, as he is to his Church and Children?

Zach. 2. 5. And then againe, God is about his Church, as a wall of fire to protect it, not only as a shadow to keepe of stormes, but as a wall of fire to keepe off and consume enemies. God in regard of protection of his Church, is a compassing unto them: as it is in *Iob*, saith Satan, *Hast thou not made a hedge about him and all that he hath?* There was a hedge about *Iob*, his wife, children and goods, which the Divell durst not enter, nor make a gap in, untill God gave him leave. Therefore, those that are under the shadow of the Church, they are safe, and may rest quietly.

Job. 1. 10.

But this is especially understood spiritually, the Church is a shadow, and her selfe under a shadow spiritually: that is, in regard of spirituall evills, from the worst enemies. For out of the Church, where is any fence for the greatest ill of all, *The wrath of God?* In the Church of God, there is set downe a way of pacification, how the wrath of God is taken of and appeased in reconciliation, by the death and sufferings of Jesus Christ; whereby the beleeving soule attaineth peace and joy unspeakable and glorious, out of the Church there is no meanes at all to pacifie the greatest ill, therefore there is no true rest out of the Church, nothing but stings and

and torments of conscience. and as there is a shelter against the wrath of God, which burnes to the bottome of Hell: so here is a remedie against death and damnation: for now death is made a friend to the Church, and the children of the Church, for the sting of it is taken away, so that it doth them more good then any thing in the world: ending all their misery and sinning, and opening a passage unto eternall happinesse. All other petty ills that attend upon death are nothing: there is a rest from all these whatsoever: for all afflictions have a sanctified use to Gods people for their good. There is therefore a rest and refreshing in the Church, for all those that come under it.

And as this is true of the Church in generall, so it is true of particular families that are little Churches, there is rest and happinesse in them: God blesseth all under the roofe of a godly man, whosoever comes under that shadow comes for a blessing, or for further hardning; we see in the current of Scripture ordinarily, that when God converted any one man, he converted his whole family, *Salvation is this day come to thy house*, (saith Christ) to *Zacchaeus*; when salvation came to his heart, it came to his house, all was the better for it. So the *Jaylor*, when he beleeved, he and his whole house were baptised: when God blesseth the governour once, then it is supposed all the house comes under the covenant of grace. *Abraham* and his house were blessed. But this holds not

Luk. 19.9.

Act. 16.33.

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alwayes, for there was a *Cham* in good *Noahs* family, still there will be Ravens and wilde beasts, among the tame beasts: there will be an *Ishmael* in *Abrahams* family, a *Dan* in the Church of *Iuda*, a *Iudas* in Christs family, and a *Demas* among Gods people. That is, let the family be never so good, you shall have some by Gods judgement naught in the same. As it is said of *Ieremiahs* figs, the good figs were exceeding good, and the bad exceeding bad. There is none so good as those that are in a gratious family, and none so naught, as such who are naught there. Because they are cursed and under a curse, being bad under such gratious meanes: being like the ground which receives the raine and showers from Heaven, and yet is not the better for it, and so is accursed. If a man who is untoward were in a gratious family, it is supposed he would be better, but those who are naught where they should be good, under abundance of meanes, such are in danger to be sealed to eternall destruction. Such being bad, are very bad, who though they breake not out to dangerous enormities, because of the place; yet to have a barren untractable heart under aboundance of meanes, is to be hardened to destruction, without a speciall mercie to make it worke afterwards. For some who have lived in gratious families, though for the present the seed fructified not; yet have afterwards found that seed fructifie after a long time, and have blessed God that ever they came under such

Ier. 24. 3.

Heb. 6. 7, 8.

a shadow: therefore though such barrennesse be a dangerous signe, yet must we not suddenly either condemne our selves or others in this case. Because in the things of God in the Church, it is as in nature, the seed springs not as soone as it is sowen: so that grace at length which hath seem'd to lie dead, after many yeares may sprout out. *Monica* Saint *Austins* mother, was a gratious woman whilst he was an untoward young man, as appeareth by his owne confessions: yet his mother having prayed much for him, he was converted after her death, and became a glorious Father and instrument of the Churches good. It is ordinary amongst us, many when they have gone astray, reflect home upon themselves, consider under what meanes they have beene, calling to minde the gratious instructions they have had, and so by Gods assistance are new men. Therefore let none despaire, in regard of time or place; because God may have further aimes then we can reach too; but unlesse God give a speciall blessing after such watering, it is for the increase of condemnation, not to profit under such abounding meanes, but still to be like *Pharoahs* leane kine, full fed and leane still. For the Promise is: *Those that are under his shadow shall returne.* Gen. 41.

There is here a fit occasion offered to spend much time in pressing care upon those that are Governours, that even out of love unto those that are under them, they would labour to bee gratious: because if they be gratious, God will

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give them those that are in their family. The whole family was baptised when the Master was baptised, and when any man was called, the whole family came within the covenant. When *Shechem* and *Hamor* were circumcised, all the cittie was circumcised also. It is true especially of Governours, there is no man that hath grace for himselfe alone: God gives speciall graces to speciall persons to be a meanes to draw on many others. Whersoever grace is, it is of a spreading nature: it is said here of such, *their branches shall spread*: It is communicative, and of a piercing nature, a little whereof will worke strangely. As we know a little short speech of a poore maid to *Naaman* the *Assyrian* how it wrought, and was the occasion of his conversion. So a little favoury speech will often minister occasion of many heavenly thoughts: God so assists it with his Spirit, that it often doth a great deale of good.

Gen. 34. 24.

2 King. 5 3.

Quest. But why are all in the family the better for the Governour that is good?

Answ. Because God gives them grace and wisdome to walke holy before them, and to shine as lights, expressing and shewing forth the vertues of God which they have felt: as we see *David* professeth, *Psal.* 101. to walke singularly and exactly in all things in the perfect way: that so he might please God and men, shining out before them in an holy glorious conversation, in the midst of his family. And as by their *example*, so by their authority they use to bring all under them to outward obedience at the least,

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least which bringeth a blessing to the family. Because when grace is once kindled in the Master, he will see all at least come to outward conformity. They cannot worke grace in them, but as the Prophet speakes, they may compell them to use the meanes; or else not to suffer a wicked and untoward person to dwell under their shadow. We know why God said that he would not conceale his secrets from *Abraham*, because he knew he would instruct and teach his family in the feare of God: so this may be said of every one that is an *Abraham*, a governour of a family; they labour to tell them all things that have done good to themselves, therefore they are the better for living under their shadow. Nay further, not only the Governour of the family, but if there be any gratiously good in the family, they doe much good. *Labans* family was the better for *Iacob*: and *Potiphar*, he and the *Iayler* both, prospered the better for *Iosephs* sake; so *Naaman* that great Captaine, fared the better for his poore maid. It is a true position, God stablisheth grace in none who are gratious for themselves meerely, but for the good of others also that converse with them: whether it bee Governour or servants: no man liveth to himselfe, and for himselfe onely; but for the good of all within their reach.

Gen. 18.19.

Gen. 30.27.

Gen. 39.5, 23.

For Use therefore, first this shall be for incouragement to all Governours of families to bee good, if not for themselves, yet in love to those that are theirs. It may be some have no care of

Vse. 1.

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their owne soules, or good. But hast thou no care of thy children, of thy wife that lieth in thy bosome, or of thy servants? if thou hast not a heart of stone or marble, surely thou wouldest desire that for them, that thou dost not for thy selfe: thinke of this, at least thou wouldest have thy children good and prosper. Labour then if we would have all prosper who come under our roofe, that our families may be little Churches of God, that all who come under our shadow may revive and returne. Therefore out of love to those that belong to us, let us labour to be good. Is it not a pitifull thing, that some who are Governours of others, they looke to them as to beasts, and use their service, as a man would use the service of his beast, they feed their bodies, and thinke they have no charge of their soules. Now this is one reason why all that come under the shadow of a good Governour are the better, because they take care for their instruction and best good, that they live in obedience to Gods Ordinances, and not like wilde creatures, ruffians, vagabonds, Cains and the like; What a strange thing is this to have a care of the body the worser part, and neglect the more excellent part, their soules?

Vse 2.

Make we also this Use of Tryall; art thou a good and a gratious Governour indeed, then grace in thy heart is communicative, it will spread over thy family, thou wilt labour to make thy children and thy servants good, to make

make all good that come under thy roofe. Other things are not alwayes communicative, gold is a dead thing, and other goods thou mayest keepe by thee, which doe not spread. But if thou hast the best good, Faith and Love, with a gratious heart; this is like oyle, or like fire which will not bee held in, but out and shew themselves they will, and shine in their kinde. So grace is a spreading communicative thing: all that comes therefore under the shadow of a gratious family, are said to returne and be the better for it. Make this therefore an use of Tryall, whether thou be a gratious Governour or not, if thou canst say with *Iosua*, when he called the people together, saith he, do what you will, I know what I will doe, *I and my house will serve the Lord*. If you will be Idolaters or so and so: *but I and my house will serve the Lord*; so certainely there is no man who in truth of heart feares the Lord, but he is able to say, *I and my house will serve the Lord*. Iosh. 24. 15.

Lastly, for Terrour, let us behold the dangerous and cursed estate of those that dwell out of Christs shadow, the Church and good meanes, who lie open to the indignation of God and storme of his wrath. Who howsoever they may blesse themselves in a thing of naught: yet it is a fearefull thing to lie under a curse: and that soule must needs be barren, where the *dew* of grace fals not; for God usually derives spirituall and heavenly things by outward meanes. *They that dwell under his shadow shall returne*. *Vse 3.*

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They shall returne to God, and by returning to him, returne as it were and revive. As when in a swound, a mans spirits returne againe, he is said to revive. But the ground of *Returning* is, that they shall returne to God and come under his roofe in the Church. But more immediately this is true, *they shall returne*, and shall quicken and revive in returning. Which we spake of in the beginning of the Chapter. Only this shall be added to that; that a wicked man out of judgement of the danger of his estate may make a stop: but turning is more then so: in this case a man turnes his face to God and Heaven-wards, to good things formerly neglected, on which he turned his back formerly. What is *turning*, but a change of posture, when the face is turned towards that the backe was to before? So it is in this Spirituall turning to God: when heavenly things are in our face, when God and *Hierusalem*, the Church are in our eyes still, minding heavenly things and not earthly, then we are said to returne. And therfore these coovers mentioned in *Jeremie*, are thus described in their conversion, *asking the way to Zion, with their faces thither-ward:* whereas before in the dayes of our corruption, we turned our backs to God, now when we returne, *we set the Lord always before us* in every thing: this is properly to returne, to revive and flourish also in returning. Thus we have heard how all who live under the shadow of Christ doe returne, and what use we should make of it.

Jer. 50. 5.

Psal. 16. 8.

The end of the eighth Sermon.

THE

THE NINTH SERMON.

Hos. 14. 6.

They that dwell under his shadow shall return, they shall revive as the Corne, and grow as the Vine, the scent thereof shall be as the Wine of Lebanon.

OUR desire of good things is not so large as God is bounteifull in satisfying our desires, and going beyond them, as wee see in this Chapter, their hearts were too narrow to receive all that good which God intended them. *Receive us graciously*, this was their petition: wherunto God answers, *that he would be as the dew unto them, that they should grow as the Lillie, and cast forth their roots as Lebanon: and their branches shall spread: that* they

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they ſhould grow in all dimenſions, upwards and downwards, and ſpread in beauty and ſmell, *Their beauty ſhall be like the Olive, and their ſmell like Lebanon.* And becauſe he would be God-like, like himſelfe, that is, throughly and abundantly gratious and mercifull, he doth not only (as we have heard) promiſe a bleſſing to Iſraell himſelfe, but unto all neere unto him, and belonging to him: *Thoſe that dwell under his ſhadow ſhall returne, they ſhall revive as the corne.*

We are all too ſhallow to conceive either the infinite vaſtneſſe of Gods juſtice to impenitent ſinners, or his boundleſſe mercy and goodnes to his poore Church and children. Therfore God to help our weake conceit in this kind borrowerh all the excellencies of nature, and makes uſe of them in grace. He takes out of the booke of nature into his booke what may inſtruct our ſoules: and therfore ſets down the growing eſtate of a Chriſtian by all excellent compariſons that nature will afford, many whereof we have gone over, the laſt we ſpake of was, that mercy which God ſuperabundantly ſhewes unto the friends and ſervants of the Church, *Thoſe that dwell under his ſhadow ſhall returne.* Now thoſe that ſhall thus *returne*, they *revive in returning*: for they turne to the fountaine of life, to the Sonne of Righteouſneſſe: they come under Gods grace, therefore they muſt needs *returne* and *revive* in vigor, as they returne to God: which vigor is eſpecially meant here, when he ſaith, *Thoſe that dwell under his ſhadow ſhall returne.*

They

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They shall revive as the Corne.

Now how doth the corne revive? not to speake of that comparison, that the godly are corne and not chaffe, as the wicked are, who are driven too and fro without any solidity, which though true, is not here especially aimed at. For it is supposed that they who are good and gratious have a substance, solidnesse, usefulnesse and goodnesse in them like the corne; not being emptie chaffe, which the wind blowes away. This is usefull to mention: but to come to the scope intended by the Prophet. Psal. 1.

They shall revive as the Corne. 1. In this first, that as the corne when unsowen it lies dead in the granarie, fructifieth not, but when it is sown springs up to an hundred fold, as we read of in *Isaacks* time, who received so much increase. So it is with converted Christians before they were under any gratious meanes, or in a good place, they lay as it were dead and did not spring forth. But afterwards being planted and sowen under gratious meanes, in good company, in a good family, then they increase and grow up and multiplie: *They revive like the Corne.* Gen. 26. 12.

And then againe as it is with the Corne, though it seeme to die, and doth indeed die in some sort, covered with winter stormes ere it spring out from the oppressions of frost and snow, and hard weather, as if it were altogether perished: yet notwithstanding it is all the while a preparing for springing up againe more gloriously. So it is with the Church, which 2.

seemes

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seemes to die often in regard of spirituall mortification by afflictions, whereby it is dead to the world: yet all this while, there is a blessed life in the spirit, preparing the soule under the hard pressures of all weathers, to a glorious springing up againe. Therefore the Church hath no hurt by afflictions, no more then the corne hath by the winter, which is as necessary for it, as the spring-time, or summer. For else, how should the earth be ripened and prepared? how should the wormes and weeds bee killed, if it were not for hard weather? So it is with a Christian, those afflictions that he suffers, and under which he seemes to be buried, they are as usefull to him as all his comforts. Nay a Christian is more beholding to afflictions for his graces and comforts, then he is to outward blessings. One would thinke that the goldsmith were a spoyling his plate when he is a burning of it, when all that while the drosse is but a consuming out of it; and the vessell so hammered and beaten out, is but a preparing to be a vessell of honour to stand before some great man. So it is with a Christian: an ignorant person looking but one way, thinks God neglects such a one, and that if God cared for such a one, or such a one, would or could such and such things befall them? they conclude hence (as the Psalmist saith) *God hath forsaken him*, and forgotten him. And as Christ the head of the Church was thought to be forgotten and neglected, even when he was most

Psal. 71. 11.

deare

deare and pretious unto God: so even they all this while, the Spirit of God is working an excellent worke in them, preparing and fitting them for grace and glory. Therefore in that respect also: *They shall revive as the Corne.*

Thirdly, *They shall revive as the Corne in regard of fructification*; It is true both of the Church and of particular graces. We see one graine of corne when it is almost perished and turn'd to froth, nothing in a manner, presently out of it springs a stalke, and thence an eare and in that many eares, God giving it a body, sixtie or a hundred fold as he pleaseth. So it is with a Christian, when he is planted he will leaven others, and those others and others. A few Apostles leavened the whole world, scattering the Gospell like lightning all over the same. So it is true of grace in Gods Children, it is like a graine of mustard-seed at the first, yet it growes up and fructifies, from knowledge to knowledg, faith to faith, and grace to grace, from vertue to vertue, from strength to strength, from one degree to another: nothing lesse at first, and nothing more great or glorious in this world in progresse of time, nothing so admired of God, and pleasing unto man: as this which makes one all glorious and without spot. 3. Mat. 13. 32.

O! what can be said more to incourage us to come under gratious meanes, to love God and his Ordinances, good company and the communion of Saints, considering they are such happy people? *Those that are under their shadow*

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shadow shall returne, revive and bee vigorous; *They shall revive as the corne*, which doth (when it seemeth to bee dead) notwithstanding all weathers grow up and multiply. And whereas it seem'd dead before and lay hid, being sowen it growes: So being planted in the Church we shall grow: for there is a hidden vertue in the least grace, in the least of Gods Ordinances, more then wee are aware off (saith Christ) Mat. 18.20. *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the middest of them.* Much more is this made good in great Congregations and families. But this is not all, he saith;

They shall grow as the Vine.

Howsoever the Church which is the mother Church growes before in the former words: the new Church that comes under her shadow, shall grow in the same manner; *They shall grow as the Lillie: their Branches shall spread:* and more it is said here, *They shall grow as the Vine.* It is a comparison delightfull to the Holy Ghost, to compare Christ to a Vine, the Church to a Vineyard: and Christians unto Vines: but such as draw all their moysture and fatnesse in them from Christ the true Vine, their sweetnesse being a derivative sweetnesse.

They shall grow as the Vine.

I. *The Vine is fruitfull so Christians.* Iud 9.9,13. The Vine we know is a fruitfull plant: as we reade in the Judges: The *Olive* and the *Vine* would not forsake their sweetnesse to be a King: for it is said by them, that they revive God and man, being pleasing to them. So every true Christian

Christian is like a vine for fruitfulnes, he is a tree of Righteousnesse, a plant of Gods owne planting, a vine that spends himselfe in bearing fruit.

2. Againe, as it is fruitfull, so it is exceeding fruitfull, abounding in fruit, so Christians are vines, not only for a little fruit that they beare: but because they are abundantly fruitfull, which is premised: that if they doe as they should do; they shall be vines abundant in the worke of the Lord:

3. And further, the Vine as we know is never a whit the worse for pruning, but is pruned and cut (as our Saviour speakes) *that it may bring forth the more fruit*. So the Church and people of God are never a whit the worse for afflictions: for as the best vines need dressing and pruning, the best ground plowing, the best linnen washing, the best mettall the fire to consume away the drosse, the best things we use having something amisse. So the best Christians need dressing and purging from the great husbandman, whereby they are not the worse but the better, having thereby much corruption purged away from them: as the pruning of the vine, makes it not the worse, but drawes wild things from it, which would draw away the strength of the vine. A Christian is the better for his afflictions. wherein the glory of the Church especially consists. For the Church never thrived better then in *Ægypt*, where they laboured to crush and to cut the vine. God brought his vine out of *Ægypt* for all this, maugre all the malice of

Ioh. 15. 2.

of the enemies. The Church was never more glorious in its owne seate, then it was in *Babylon* under the *Captivity*, how glorious then was the Church in *Daniel* and others.

4. *The Vine is rugged and unseemely.*

Againe, to the outward appearance, the Vine is a rugged unseemely plant, being not sightly and beautifull to look on: yet is it aboundantly fruitfull under that unsightlines. So if we look to the outward state and face of the Church, it is nothing else to looke to, but a deformed company, defaced by affliction, live-lesse here (as it were) *having their life hid up with God in Christ*, (as the Apostle speakes) their life here is covered over with many afflictions, crosses, infirmities and disgraces, whereunto they are subject, like unto other men. Therefore as it was the state of the head, to have no outward forme or beauty, though inwardly he was all glorious. So the beauty of the Church is inward: for outward shew, it being unsightly like the vine, crooked and uneven, there being nothing delightfull in it, unlesse it be in regard of the fruit that comes from it. So it is with the Church of God and particular Christians: who though in outward government they have not that pollicy and outward glory other governments have, yet there is an inward secret worke of Gods government of the Church by contraries, which exceeds all other pollicies, wherein he brings glory from shame, life by death, hee brings downe and lifts up; when he is about his excellent worke, he humbleth first. This is

Col. 3. 3.

How God governes his Church by contraries.

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an ordinary way, therefore we must not take offence at any outward deformitie that we see in the Church, and in Gods Children, when they seeme to be trampled upon, they are but as vines, unsightly to the eye, they have a life, though it be a hidden one.

It is excellently set downe by *Ezekiel*, what the Vine is of it selfe, it is serviceable for nothing: we cannot make a pinne of it; It is such a brittle wood as is good for nothing but to beare fruit. So take a Christian that professeth Religion, if he be not fruitfull in his place, of all men he is the worst: of all men he is either the best, or the worst: as the vine, if it beare fruit it is the best, though it be an unsightly tree: but otherwise it is fit for nothing but the fire. Therefore let no man glory in his profession, that he is baptised, heares Sermons, and reads: but where is thy fruit? wherefore serves the dressing and pruning of the vine, but for fruit? if there be no fruit, a Christian is the worst man that lives: worst, in regard that he is bad under good meanes, and in condition he is the worst of all men, his torment is the greater. Those that are barren and unfruitfull under meanes, the time will come, that they will wish they had never enjoyed such a testimony against themselves. Ezek. 15.

And further, a Vine is so weake that it must be prop'd and supported along, or else it will lie on the ground; such is the estate of the Church, which must have something to fence it and under-prop it. God is the strength of the 5.

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Church, it is a wondrous weake plant. The Children of God are wondrous weake, and expoſed to a wonderfull deale of miſery: in regard whereof, and of the injuries and weakneſſes they are expoſed too, they muſt have ſupport. A Chriſtian is compared to the ſhifleſſe things, Sheep, Lambes and Doves, and in the plants they are compared to the Vine, which needs a
Prov. 30. 26. ſtrong ſupport, And (as *Salomon* ſaith of the Conies) though they are a weake people of themſelves, yet notwithſtanding they have a ſtrong rocke over their heads, where they are ſafe, though they be as weake as the vine. So Gods people though they be weake of themſelves; yet they have a ſtrong ſupport to uphold them; God by the Ordinances of Magiſtracy and Miniſtry (eſpecially by his Spirit) keepes them up and ſupports them, that they ſpread in largeneſſe and in fruitfulneſſe.

Vſe. 1. Is this ſo, then let us examine our ſelves what our fruit is: if we be vines what is our fruit? what comes from us? Certainely if we doe not ſhew foorth that fruit we ſhould in our lives and converſations, in our ſpeech, carriage and actions, when we are called to it, it is an argument that as yet the dew of Gods grace hath never fallen upon us ſo as it muſt before we come to Heaven. As was ſaid before, a man may endure a dead plant in his ground; but in his Orchard he will not. He may endure weeds in paſtures, in neglected grounds, but not in his garden. If we be Lillies in Gods Garden, and Vines in his Orchard,

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chard, we muſt be fruitfull and grow, or elſe God will not endure us. Of all woes, the greateſt woe lies upon them, who enjoy plentifull and abundant meanes and yet are not fruitfull. Mat 11.21.

That we are Vines, and Gods Vines, it is in the next place an Uſe of Comfort; that God therefore will have a care of us, if we be fruitfull, he will have a ſpeciall care of that place where his vines are planted, if wee ſee many gratious perſons and families who are conſcionable in their practice and converſation, we may reſt aſſured that God the great husbandman will have a ſpeciall care of thoſe choice vines, and the places they live in, they carry the bleſſing of God with them whereſoever they goe, with a ſhadow and protection, making every place the better for them. For God will care for thoſe vines which bring foorth much fruit; As it is in *Eſay*; *ſpoile it not, for there is a bleſſing in it*. If a Chriſtian be fruitfull, and labours to be more fruitfull, God gives a prohibition, he is my vine, do him no harme: *Touch not mine annoynted, nor doe my Prophets no harme*. Satan himſelf and all creatures in Heaven and in Earth, have a prohibition to touch his vines no further then ſhall be for their good. Will a man ſuffer men to come into his Orchard to break downe his vines? he will not. Surely though the ſinnes of this nation be very great: yet one thing miniſtereth hope, God hath a great many *vines* under his ſhadow and protection, many conſcionable Magiſtrates, Miniſters and people

Vſe 2.

Iſa. 65.8.

Pſal. 105.15.

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of other profeſſions; Governours of families and the like, which walke holily, God will ſpare the vineyard, even for the vines that beare fruit. A notable place amongſt others we have, *Cant.* 2.15. *Take us the Foxes and the little Foxes that ſpoile the vine: for our vines have tender grapes.* There is in every Church not onely groſſe Papiſts, and forraigne enemies, that would roote out all if it were in their power: but ſubtill foxes alſo, men that pride themſelves in diveliſh policie, to under-mine the Church and Children of God: who wherſoever they ſee vine or grapes, they malice that: both the meanes, and grace wrought by the meanes, is the object of their cruelty. Subtile foxes they are, who account it a great deale of glory to be accounted polliticke men, to do miſchiefe ſecretly and cloſely in the Church: will God ſuffer theſe foxes? No, he will not, *Take us the foxes, the little foxes that deſtroy the vines.* God hath young growing vines, ſo as he will not onely care for the great vines, but for the tender vines alſo. Chriſt hath a care of his Lambes, as he ſaid to *Peter, loveſt thou me, &c. Then feed my Lambes,* my little ones. So Chriſt ſpeakes in the Goſpell of theſe little ones, *I tell you* (of a truth) that *the Angels of* theſe little ones, *behold the face of my Father,* &c. And ſo he ſpeakes in another place; *A bruiſed reed will hee not breake, and ſmoaking flaxe will he not quench, untill hee bring forth judgment unto victorie.* So likewiſe hee promiſeth, *that*

Cant. 2. 5.

Ioh. 21. 15.

Mat. 18. 10.

Iſa. 42. 1, 2.

he

Sect. IX.

Isa. 40. 11.

he will carry the lambes in his bosome, and gently lead them that are with young.

Use 3.

The next Use shall be for incouragement unto weake ones: should tender and weake Christians then be discouraged for whom God is so carefull? surely no. Put case they bring forth but little fruite, yet, O destroy it not, for a blessing is in it. Therefore let us not be discouraged if wee be Gods vines: which is knowne and discovered, not by the abundance of fruit only, but by the kind of our fruit also; if it come from the Spirit of God, and relish of the Spirit, though it be not in such plenty; yet a vine is not a thorne, a Christian is not to be discouraged though he bring not forth abundance of fruit at the first. There are different degrees and tempers of soyle, and of ages in Christianity, which is spoken to incourage those that are good, and yet are discouraged, because it is not with them as with some other Christians of their acquaintance. Know that there is no set measure of grace necessary to salvation but truth. God doth assigne us a measure of grace according to his good pleasure, and according as he hath purposed to make us profitable to others in the use of meanes. Those whom he meanes to use for suffering or doing of great matters in the Church, those hee fits suitably for that he meanes to call them to: others have not that abundance of grace, out of Gods wisdome, who knowes best how to dispense his owne graces to his owne glory. If wee allow

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not our ſelves in our weakneſſes, but groane under them, hate them, and ſtrive againſt them, reaching towards perfection: in this caſe our weakneſſes ſhall not hurt our ſalvation; but God will perfect his power in our weakneſſe.

2 Cor. 12. 9.

So we ſee it is not the multitude of fruit, but the ſincerity of it, if it be true, that makes a Chriſtian; if there be truth of grace, it will out and ſpread the branches, it ſhall not alwayes be ſo with us. Sincerity and indeavour to grow, with a deſire and thirſt after growth, makes a man a Chriſtian. Therefore as was ſaid, we muſt not be diſcouraged, though our growth and ſpreading be not like others. Every Chriſtian hath his meaſure, though every one be bound to goe further and further, from faith to faith, and grace to grace: yet there is a bleſſing in a little, and a promiſe alſo to him that uſeth it well: *To him that hath it ſhall be given.* Chriſt hath a care that the foxes do not hurt the little tender grapes: let none therefore be diſcouraged for their non-proficiency in the wayes of God, ſo as to goe back and leave off, he knowes beſt when and how to take away the bates, ſnares and temptations that are ſet to catch them, and diſcourage them. Let God alone with his owne worke, who is the great vinedreſſer: doe thou thine owne worke, attend upon good meanes; waite upon God, and then let the malice of the world and the Divell be what they will, he will have a care of his vines, and the more care, the more young and tender they are, &c.

Mat. 13. 12.

Theſe

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These considerations may affect us, not only to take good by the vine for our bodies, but for our soules also, and so the same thing may cherish both body and soule. A Christian by grace hath an extracting vertue, to draw holy uses out of every thing, as the Holy Ghost here compares us to a vine, to teach us these and the like things now unfolded. The last thing promised is,

The sent thereof shall be as the vine of Lebanon.

This *Lebanon* was a mountanous place, on the north side of *Iudea*, wondrous fruitfull in all kind of trees, in *Cedars* and goodly *Vines*, so it did abound in spice, and all goodly things. Therefore to shew that a Christian should be the best of his ranke, he fetches comparisons from the best things in nature.

The sent thereof shall be as the vine of Lebanon.

Now the *Vine* of *Lebanon* had a sweet sent in it, both to draw to the liking, and then to delight in the taste and taking thereof. So it is with the graces of God in his children, they carry as it were a sweet sent with them, both to draw others to delight in, and taste of the same things.

Quest. But how comes it to passe that Christians send forth so sweet a sent?

Answ. Because they are in Christ, in whom the oyntment and all sweetnesse is in fulnesse. From him the *Head* first, and from thence it is derived unto the members, all who must partake of this ointment. As it is said of the head of *Aaron*, Psal. 133. 2. that that ointment which was powred on his

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head, ran downe to his skirts, and all his rich attire about. So that sweetnesse in Christ is powred on the skirts, all along upon his members, even the meanest Christian receiveth
Joh. 1. 16. *Grace for Grace*, sweetnesse from Christ. *The*
Can. 1. 3. *Virgins*: that is, such as defile not themselves with Idolatry and such other lewd courses: they follow after Christ in the smell of his sweet oyntments. It is spoken of Christ who carrieth
Psal. 45. 8. such a sweet smell with him, as *all his garments smell of Myrrh, Aloes and Casia*, &c. So sweet is the smell of Christ when he is unfolded in his Benefits and Offices, that the pure and holy virgin soules of the Saints follow after it.
Cant. 1. 3. *His name is as an oyntment powred out*; that is, himselfe is his Name, and his Name is himselfe (as the Hebrew Proverbe is) Christ made knowne in the unfolding of the Word, that is his Name. When the box is opened, all in Christ is like oyntment, in the preaching of the Word all is sweet, and nothing but sweet in Jesus. Now a Christian being a member of Christ, and a virgin soule following Christ, must needs draw sweetnesse from him, casting out that sent unto others drawen from him, because they partake of Christs annoynting. What is the name of a Christian, but a man annoynted with Christs oyntment, one annoynRev. 1. 6. ted to be a King and a Priest in some sorte therefore, they carry the savour of him whereExo 30. 26. soever they goe. *Aaron* the high Priest, had sweet garments, which made a savour where he

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he went, having Bels and sweet Pomegranates at the bottome of his garment. He had not only Bels to discover him; but sweet pomegranates also. So it is with every Christian; not only the Minister, but every Christian is a Priest under the New Testament, and carrieth a savour with him, graces that spread and cast a sweet sent in all places wheresoever, which they exercise upon all good occasions: as Saint *Paul* expresseth it, *They savour the things of the spirit.* Rom. 8. 5. Those who are in Christ, they have the Spirit of Christ, or they are none of his. And having the Spirit of Christ, they savour of the things of the Spirit, that is, their thoughts, speeches, actions, and conversation are savoury. Those *that are in the flesh* (saith the Apostle) *cannot please God*, Rom. 8. 8. they are unsavoury. A carnall man hath no savour in his speeches, they are either worldly or civill, without spirituall savour; because he hath nothing of the Spirit of Christ to savour off. His heart (saith *Salomon*) is little worth, Pro. 10. 20. the like we may say of his thoughts, actions and affections, they are unsavoury and little worth. He hath a dead heart to goodnesse, and thence whatsoever goodnesse commeth from him is forced and against the haire (as we say) But a Christian having the Spirit of Christ, and therewith communion with Christ, all his discourses and actions are for the most part savoury, those hee acteth as a Christian; therefore from his communion with Christ it is said here, *His smell shall be as Lebanon.*

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The ſent thereof ſhall be as the Vine of Lebanon.

Delightfull both to God and holy bleſſed ſpirits, likewiſe to the Church, and to the Angels which are about us, and pleaſing to our owne ſpirits; for there iſſueth a wondrous contentment, even to the conſcience of a perſon which is fruitfull and aboundant in goodneſſe, that ſoule receiveth an anſwerable proportion of comfort. As it is with heate that accompanieth fire alway; ſo there is a kinde of heate of comfort, which naturally accompanieth the heate of any good action: there remaineth a ſweet reliſh to the conſcience of the performer, reflecting with humility upon himſelf, with thankfullneſſe to God, from whoſe *Dew* (as we have heard before) commeth whatſoever is good: reflecting on this with an eye to the principall cauſe it breeds a great deale of comfort to the ſoule. As it was ſaid of *Ioſiah*, the memory of *Ioſiah* was like the oyntment of the Apothecary, whereas on the contrary, it is ſaid, *The remembrance of the wicked ſhall rot*. God threatneth the Jewes, that they ſhould be a hiſſing to all nations, and that they ſhould bee abhominable to all kinde of people (for what is ſo odious now as the name of a *Iew?*) yet certainely this whole promiſe ſhall be verified even of them: this whole Chapter having an eye unto the calling of the Jewes. The time will come that the ſent of theſe odious people (who are now the object of hatred unto all people) *ſhall bee as the Vine of Lebanon.*

Prov. 10.7.

Deut. 28.37.

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If this be so, it cuts off a carnall exception of senseleſſe persons, that thinke they can ſtop mens mouthes with this. I cannot make ſo much ſhew as you, but I hope I have as good a heart to God as you, or as the beſt. But a Christian is a *vine*, that brings forth grapes, and much fruit, and casts a sent from him (as *the sent of Lebanon*) upon all fit occasions. For his words should be, *as the Apples of Gold set with pictures of silver.* He is seasonable in his actions of Consolation, and bringeth foorth his fruit in due season, as the promise is. For *Salomon* sheweth, that every thing is made beautifull in his season. Those therefore that have not a good word to speake, but rather expresse the contrarie, rotten unsavoury discourse, vaine in their conversation, savouring nothing that is good: how have they as good a heart to God as the best? No, this is not to be a Christian, who should savour like *Aarons* garments, or like these graces comming from his head to him: who should spread abroad his sweetnesse unto others, *shining out as a light* amongst others? Therefore away with this base plea: a rotten speech, argueth a rotten heart. What can come out of a vessell but such as is within it; if the issues be naught, what is the vessell but naught? if all be unsavoury outward, what is there but a rotten heart within.

Vse. 1.

Prov 25.11.

Psal. 1.3. Eccl. 3.11.

Mat. 22.35.

Againe, if Christians should cast a sent and savour, this should moove and stirre them up, if they will answer their title to be Christians, sweet,

Vse 2.

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sweet, annoynted persons, Priests to God, to labour more and more to be spirituall and savour the things of the Spirit: and to labour for more and more communion with Christ in the use of all sanctified meanes, that they may have the Spirit of Christ in their conversation, shewing foorth the Humility, Patience, Love and Obedience of Christ. 1 Pet. 2. 9. *As Peter speakes and exhorteth us, to shew foorth the vertues of him who hath called us from darknesse into his marvellous light.* Then we answer our title, and *cast foorth a sent like Lebanon*, when inwardly and outwardly, all things joyne to make us fruitfull and savoury before God and man.

Quest. What will come of it if we be fruitfull and savourie?

Answ. 1. The excellency of a savoury and fruitfull conversation. God will be more pleased in all our actions, and will *smell a sweet savour of rest*, as it is said of *Noah* after his comming out of the *Arke*, for God delights in his owne graces, which he admireth in us. As hee said to the woeman of *Canaan*, *O woeman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee as thou wilt.* Mat. 15. 28. God as it were stands admiring his owne graces, he is so delighted with the Faith, Love, Prayers and Patience of his children, which is further excellently expressed in the *Canticles*. *Who is this that commeth up out of the wildernesse like pillars of smoake, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, and all the spices of the merchant?* Cant. 3. 6. Christ there is brought in admiring at his Church and Children, conflicting through all the miseries and incumbrances of this

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this world, which hinder and oppoſe their journey to Heaven-wards, wherein they thruſt forth all the practiſe of their holy graces, which ſmell like ſpices. Then let us not envy God, the Saints, and holy people, the ſweetneſſe of our graces, but let our ſent ſmell abroad to the content and comfort of all, that they may delight in theſe graces that come from us, in our Humility, Patience, Faith, Love, Sincerity, and all theſe graces wherein we reſemble Chriſt, and ſhew forth his holy vertues: therefore for our owne comfort, and the delight of all, and to aſſure our ſelves of Heaven, and of the love of God whilſt we live here, let us labour to be fruitfull in our converſation, and to caſt forth a ſent in regard of others, which hath an attractive drawing force. For when they ſee a holy, fruitfull and gratious converſation, it caſts forth a ſent and makes others like Religon: So God is glorified, and Religion is adorned. What greater ornament to Religion, then to ſee a fruitfull gratious Chriſtian, who hath ability and a heart to doe good upon all occaſions, with an humble, meeke, peaceable ſpirit, taught of God to be ſo for the good and love of others? Cant. 5.

There muſt be Pomegranates with bells, a ſweet converſation with words, a little whereof will doe more good to others then a great many words. A good converſation is ſweet, and hath a kind of oratorie joyned with it. Therefore if neither for God, or Chriſt, or others, yet for our owne ſakes and the reflection of that good

That a little gratious converſation is more winning then many words.

good ſent upon our ſelves, let us be fruitfull. A man cannot grow in fruitfulneſſe, but hee muſt needs grow in comfort, Peace and Joy. Nothing cheereth and ſolaceth the heart of a Chriſtian more then this, the conſcience that God honoureth him to be fruitfull, to doe good, and caſt a ſweet ſavor, to draw others to good things. This will comfort us upon our death-beds, more then all other things. Therfore in all theſe reſpects, for love of God, others and our ſelves, which are delighted with the expreſſions of our graces, let us labour to be fruitfull trees in Gods garden, and to bring forth much fruit, that we may ſend forth *a ſent like Lebanon*.

Now who would not be in ſuch an eſtate and condition as this; as to have title to all theſe gratious promiſes, for the *dew* of *Grace* to fall upon him, *To grow as Lillies* in height, and to ſpread as other plants doe, to grow upwards, and downewards, to be *rooted* as *Cedars*, and *fruitfull* as *Vines*. The Spirit of God ſets himſelfe here to ſhew Spirituall things by Earthly compariſons, to make us the more capable of them. The miſery of the contrary condition may well ſtirre us up to ſeeke after the forementioned. For what a miſery is it, to have the curſe of God upon ones ſoule, to have it like the barren wilderneſſe, void of all grace and comfort that may delight others, or is ſpirituall, ſavoury, or ſavingly good? So all theſe promiſes tend to incourage us to be in the condition of Gods Children, that when we are in that eſtate,

eſtate, we may comfort our ſelves, and be able to claime our part, portion and intereſt in theſe excellent promiſes.

Thus by Gods bleſſing we have paſſed over the particulars of Gods gratious promiſes to his Church, and all that ſhall come under the Church; all which ſhould incourage us to goe to God, and doe as the Church doth here, *take words to our ſelves*, and deſire God, *to take away all iniquity, and heale all our backeſlidings*, and that we may renounce all vaine confidence, as the Church doth here: who is taught to truſt horſes no longer; *Aſſur ſhall not ſave us*. And then let us (as was ſaid) cleave unto the bleſſed promiſes, that we may improove them, and make them our own every day more and more. Therfore let us have in the eye of our ſoule the excellency of growth; or elſe we ſhall not value theſe promiſes. Let us conſider what an excellent condition it is to grow, flouriſh and be fruitfull, having a due eſteeme of all theſe promiſes before hand. Doe but conſider how excellent a Chriſtian is that groweth above others, what a majeſty he hath in his carriage? how undauntedly he walks in all oppoſitions whatſoever, as a *Lyon* in his courſes. How he overlookes Hell, wrath, death, damnation and all. What a ſweet communion he enjoyeth with God in all the diſconſolations that the world puts upon him. He carrieth his Heaven in his heart, and a Paradice within him, which is planted with all graces, whereas another man carrieth his Hell about him.

The excellency of a growing Chriſtian. Prov. 28. 1.

Where-

Wherefore let us take ſuch courſes to helpe our ſelves as the Church doth here: truſt in God and not in man, or in the arme of fleſh; and be incouraged from all that hath beene ſaid, to have a good conceit of God, to be fruitfull and draw on others to goodneſſe, that God, his Saints and Angels may be delighted with the ſent of our graces, and our ſelves comforted; that we may rejoyce in our portion and lot that God hath dealt ſo gratiouſly to us, and glory more that he hath made us members of Chriſt, and heires of Heaven, then in any condition of this world. O the incomparable excellent ſtate of a Chriſtian, above all the glory of this world: who not onely groweth, but ſhall grow to Heaven-wards ſtill; and as hee hath begun to hate ſinne, ſhall hate it more and more: God hath undertaken it ſhall be ſo: *Ephraim* after all theſe ſweete promiſes and *dew* of *Grace*, ſhall ſay; *What have I any more to doe with Idols*, &c. The proſecution whereof muſt be referred untill the next time.

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The end of the ninth Sermon.

THE

THE TENTH SERMON.

Hos. 14. 8.

Ephraim shall say, what have I any more to doe with Idols? I have heard him and observed him: I am like a greene fire Tree, from me is thy fruit found.

WEE have heard at severall times heretofore, how God out of the largenesse of his goodnesse, goeth beyond those desires which he perceth into his peoples hearts. They briefly intreat him to *doe good* to them, and to deale graciously with them. And he answereth them largely: that *he will be as the Dew to them*, that *they shall grow as*

the Lilly, and caſt foorth their rootes as Lebanon, All ſet out by moſt excellent compariſons, helping grace by nature, our ſoules by our bodies, and our ſpirits by our ſenſes. As we have ſoules and bodies, ſo God applieth himſelfe to both. *His Branches ſhall ſpread; his Beauty ſhall be as the Olive, and his ſmell as Lebanon.*

Then in the 7. Verſe, his gratious promiſe reacheth unto thoſe who dwel under the Church: *Thoſe that dwell under his ſhadow ſhall returne, they ſhall revive as the corne, and grow as the Vine,* &c. The new Church that ſhall come under the ſhadow of the old, ſhall flouriſh as the ancient did. *They that dwell under his ſhadow,* that is under *Ephraims* and *Iſraels ſhadow ſhall return,* and be partakers of the ſame dew of grace.

Now this eighth verſe containeth a further gratious promiſe to *Ephraim* upon his repenting and former reſolutions: *Ephraim* ſaid, *Aſſur ſhall not ſave us, wee will not ride upon horſes: neither will we ſay any more to the worke of our hands ye are our gods.* Now what ſaith God here? (repeating the words of *Ephraim*) *Ephraim* (ſhall ſay) is not in the Originall, but onely ſet downe to expreſſe what the meaning is, whereas *Ephraim* ſaid, *What have I any more to doe with Idols? Ephraim* ſhall have this anſwer, *I have heard him, and obſerved him, I am like a greene fir-tree: from me is thy fruit found.*

As though the Lord had ſaid, let not *Ephraim* thinke that when hee hath forſooke Idols, hee hath forſaken his comfort, (as though there were

no

no comfort in walking according to the rule of my Word and Laws.) Let him know that in steed of these poore and base comforts, either in grosse Idolatry, or other more cunning Idolatries whatsoever which formerly tooke him up, that now he shall exchange them for more solid and substantiall comforts. For, *I have heard him and observed him*: so that let him see what he looseth in parting with base corruptions, worldly lusts, pleasures and the like, he shall find it more abundantly supplied in a farre more excellent manner in me, and in the fruits and effects of my love unto him; so as he shall find that there is nothing lost by entering strictly into my service. And whereas formerly hee walked in a vaine shadow, in relying on *Egypt*, *Ashur*, *and the workes of his owne hands*: Now he shall have a farre more excellent shadow, which no storme, nor raine, nor injury of weather can pierce through: *I am like a greene firre-tree unto him.* Not such a shadow as those his Idols were, who could not keepe off the storme of Gods wrath from him, nor such a shadow as *Ionahs gourd* was, which flourished for one day, and was nipt the next. No, I will be constant and permanent as my selfe, *I will be as the greene firre tree*; a constant shadow to keepe backe all annoyance whatsoever; not like the cursed noysome shadow of Idols, under which *Ephraim* rested before. But, *I will observe and regard him: and be like a greene firre-tree unto him.* I will not onely be a shadow and shelter of defence

Ionah 4. 5, 6.

unto him from injury and molestation, that hee may rest quietly; but hee shall be also *fruitfull*: though the *first tree* be not so fruitfull: yet *from me is thy fruit found*, whatsoever he is in himselfe; yet this shall not be matter of discouragement unto him: I am all-sufficient, there is enough in me to supply him with: *from me is thy fruit found*. But to take them in order.

Ephraim shall say, what have I any more to doe with Idols, &c.

Somethinke the words come upon *Ephraims* observing and hearing of him: so as when God is seene in his most excellent Majesty and glory, and observed as he is just, mercifull and wonderfull terrible in himselfe, that this manner of hearing and observation causeth flesh and blood so to stoope and reforme, as they yeeld themselves, and resigne up all unto God, seeing that miserable condition they are in, and what an infinite distance there is betwixt their impurity, and Gods most excellent holinesse. As we read of *Isaiah* when hee had seene God in his throne of Majesty; *Woe is me* (saith he) *for I am undone, because I am a man of uncleane lips: and I dwell in the midst of a people of uncleane lips: for mine eyes have seene the King, the Lord of Hosts.* Isa. 6. 5.

And so of *Iob*, *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the eare, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherfore I abhorre my selfe, and repent in dust and ashes.* Iob 42. 5, 6.

Which indeed is true in the generall, that a man then truely repenteth and turneth unto God, when hee knoweth God and himselfe to purpose;

pose; and never effectually untill then: for Christ who cannot lie, and is truth it selfe, calleth this kind of knowledge eternall life. *This is life eternall, to know thee to be the onely very God, and whom thou hast sent Iesus Christ.* But though this be a generall truth: yet we take it here rather for an incouragement unto *Ephraim*, as before, that nothing is lost by cleaving unto Gods waies, and forsaking of sin. Now wheras *Ephraim* (shall say) *what have I any more to doe with Idols*: In the words we may consider. Sect. X. Ioh. 17. 3.

1. The manner of expression, with a great indignation of soule, *What have I any more to doe*, &c.

2. The matter so hated with indignation, is *Idolatry*, their former *Idols*. *Ephraim* (shall say) *what have I any more to doe with Idols.*

Ephraim we see renounceth *Idolatry*, but in what manner is this done? with an high indignation of zeale and hatred: *What have I any more to doe with Idols*: Hee doth not say now that *Ephraim* hath left *Idolatry*, I will supply all these comforts that they had by *Idols*. But *Ephraim* loathes *Idolatry*, therefore he saith *What have I any more to doe with Idols?* It is a figurative Question, implying a strong deniall with a strong indignation. *What have I any more to doe with Idols?* I have had too much to doe with them: I have now nothing to doe with *Idols*. It is a negation and deniall with as great aversation, and abomination as can be possibly expreſt: for in such questions, the deni-

The true renouncing of sin must be with indignation.

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all is ſet forth more ſtrongly by a negation, and with a greater emphaſis, then by any affirmation is poſſible to expreſſe. So elegant is the Spirit of God in ſetting forth ſpirituall things in a heavenly and tranſcendent manner.

Ephraim (ſhall ſay) *what have I any more to doe with Idols*, &c.

Hence in that *Ephraim* ſhall ſay thus, and ſay it with ſuch vehemency of ſpirit and indignation, we may obſerve in generall.

Obſerv. *There is excellent uſe of the affections.*

God hath planted the affections in us to be as the winde, to carry the ſoule too and fro, forward or backeward: for affections are planted in the ſoule anſwerable to things aimed at by it. For, as in the nature of things, there be good and bad, delightfull and hatefull, hurting or pleaſing: ſo anſwerably God hath framed the ſoule to the nature of things. For good things, God hath planted affections in us to joyne, claſpe, imbrace them and welcome them, as Love, Joy, Delight, and ſuch like. And for evill things, he hath planted affections to avoid them, as indignation, hatred and the like. Indeed Religion is mainely in the affections, whereof there is excellent uſe, take away them, and take away all Religion whatſoever. A man, were it not for his affections, is like *Mare mortuum*, the dead Sea that never ſtirreth. Therefore it is but a doting idle conceit of theſe rigid men, that take away affections: much like the folly of them, who becauſe they have

That the ſoule hath affections ſutable to the things it aimeth at.

That Religion is eſpecially in the affections.

have bin drunke with wine, do therefore cut up all the vines. But the way were to moderate the acceſſe, not to cut up the vines. So for the affections, we muſt not root them up, or cut them down, but order them aright. For what doth the firſt Commandement require? [*Thou ſhalt have no other gods but me,*] But a right ordering of all the affections of the ſoule, *Ioy, delight, truſt* and *feare*, and the whole frame of them to be carried to God. For the inward worſhip of God is nothing els, but the excellent working of theſe affections ſutably to the Law, with the deteſtation of the contrary. It is not knowledge that makes a man a good man, but the affections: the Divell and wicked ſpirits know much; but they have no love, joy, or delight in them. Therfore we muſt value our ſelves and things, as we are in our will and affections: for ſo God valueth us, and we ſhould value others thereby. This well done would bring us a wondrous deale of comfort, and ſtop our too much and rigid judging and cenſuring of others.

Ephraim (ſhall ſay) *what have I any more to doe with Idols?*

Now in particular we ſee here, that *Ephraim* not only leaveth *Idols*, but there is planted in him a ſound indignation againſt them: Whence we may learne,

That it is not enough to leave ſin; but we muſt loath ſin alſo. *Obſerv.*

A notable place to this purpoſe wee have in the Prophecy of *Iſaiah*, what they ſhould doe

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after their converſion, in the caſe of hatred to Idolatry. *Ye ſhall defile alſo the covering of thy graven Images of ſilver, and the ornament of thy molten Images of gold; thou ſhalt caſt them away as a menſtruous cloth, thou ſhalt ſay unto it get thee hence.* There is a hatred and a ſtrong loathing indignation againſt ſin, when it is diſcovered in the pollution and vileneſſe thereof: which affection of hatred God hath planted to draw the ſoule away from any thing that is truely hurtfull to it. It is not enough to leave ſin for ſome by ends, as feare of puniſhment, ſhame and the like: but we muſt loath it alſo. The Prophet *David* when he profeſſeth his love to the law: how proveth he it? *I hate and abhorre lying.* And ſo againe, *Doe not I hate them (O Lord) that hate thee? and am not I grieved with thoſe that riſe up againſt thee? I hate them with perfect hatred, I account them mine enemies.* Here is hatred and perfect hatred with abhomination.

Iſa 30. 22.

Pſal. 119. 163.

Pſal. 139. 21.

Reaſon 1. The Reaſon is, becauſe God is a Spirit, and lookes to the bent of our ſpirits, ſeeing what we love and what we hate: therfore the ſtrength of this conſideration draweth the ſoule to hate and love with God, as he hates and loves: and as much as may be to hate ſin as he doth.

Ioh. 4. 24.

Reaſon 2. And then againe, he requireth our heart eſpecially, *My ſonne give me thy heart.* Give me thy love in that which is good, and hate that which is ill. What ill we leave, we muſt hate firſt; and what good wee doe, wee muſt firſt love, or elſe we ſhall never doe either of them

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them acceptably to purpose. What the heart doth not, is not done in Religion, if it hath no hand in the avoiding of ill, it is not avoided: if it have no hand in the doing of good, it is not done before God. Therefore in true conversion, there must be a loathing of sin.

Reason 3. Thirdly, Because in all true conversion there is a new nature put in us; now the New Creature, which partaketh of the Divine Nature whereby we resemble God, it hath an Antipathy to the greatest ill, which is sin, the cause of all other evils whatsoever, which maketh us opposite to God, defileth the soule, and hindreth our sweet communion with him. A new Creature we know hath a new disposition, and is opposite to the works of the flesh, they are contrary to one another: so that we see it cleare, that we *must not onely leave, but loath sin.*

Quest. *But how may we know, discerne, and try this true hatred of sin.*

Answ. Our hatred of sinne is, when it is universall. First, true hatred is universall, he who hates ill truly, hates it universally in the whole kinde. As we see in wicked men and divels who hate God and all goodnesse: so on the contrary, those that are good, hate all ill whatsoever, whether it pleasure, or displeasure them, they stand not upon it, they hate the very nature of all ill. Those whose obedience and affections are partiall, they hate some evils, but not others, which is not true hatred wrought by the Spirit of God, for that is universall to the whole kind.

2. Implacable. Then also, wheresoever true hatred is, it is unplaca-

unplacable and unappeasable there's no true end of sound hatred, but by the abolishing altogether of that thing it hates; as wee see the hatred of Satan to the Church and people of God, is unappeasable and unquenchable; nothing in the world can stay Satans hatred, nor the hatred of his instruments, who hate the remembrance of Gods people. Therefore the very name of *Calvin* and *Luther* must be put out of their bookes to satisfie their hatred. Not only when they are dead, burne their bones, but abolish their memory if they can. So there is the like disposition in Gods people to that which is ill. A godly disposition it hateth sin even to the death, and is not quiet untill all sin be abolished. Whereupon it is never quiet in this life, but desires Heaven, not enduring patiently the least reliques and rags of sin: desiring that that which it so hateth, might have no being at all. Those who mince and cull things, who are so gentle and tender towards their sins and corruptions in themselves and others: is this that hatred which is unappeasable, and never rests, till it see either a through Reformation or abolishing of what it so hateth. Wherin it is a more rooted affection then anger, for hatred is a rooted offensive displeasure against persons and things: and so rooted as that nothing in the world can root it out. Anger may be appeased, it is appeased in God, and it may and must be in men. But hatred is implacable, aiming at the annihilation of the thing so hated.

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Again, where true hatred and indignation is *there the neerer the ill is to us, the more we hate it*, &c. As we hate it in it ſelfe, ſo we hate it the more the nearer it is to us, as a *Toade* or any venimous thing, the neerer it is to us, wee loath and abhorre it the more. So certainely whoſoever hates and abhorreth ſin as ſin (as it is a hatefull thing to a renewed ſoule) ſo he hateth ſin more in himſelfe then in others: becauſe it is neereſt in his owne boſome. Every man hates a ſnake more in his boſome then a farre off, becauſe it is more likely to do him harme there. Therefore thoſe that flatter their owne corruptions, and are violent againſt others, as *Iudah* againſt *Thamar*, *ſhe ſhal be burned, bring her forth and burn her*, when himſelfe had gotten her with child. So many are ſevere in puniſhing of others, as if they were wondrous zealous: but what are they in their owne breaſt? do they reforme ſin in their owne hearts and lives? he that truly hates ſin, he hateth his own ſins more then others, becauſe it is neere him.

3. *When we hate ſinne chiefly in our ſelves.*

Gen 38.24.

And ſo (in proportion) he that hates ſin truely will hate it in his owne family, children and ſervants, more then in others abroad. It was a great fault in *David*, that he cockered up *Adonijah* and others in his owne houſe, whilſt he was more ſtrict abroad. Can men thinke to redreſſe and hate ſin in the common-wealth, and yet ſuffer it in their families? true hatred is moſt converſant in its ſtrength neere hand. Thoſe who ſuffer deboyſtneſſe and prophaneneſſe

4. *When we hate ſin moſt in our families*, &c.

nesse in their families, and never check it in their children and servants, they hate not sin, whatsoever countenance they may take upon them of reformation abroad, it commeth out of by-respects, and not out of true hatred.

5. *When we hate the greatest sin in the greatest measure.*

Againe, he that hateth sin truely as sin will hate the greatest sin in the greatest measure, because he hates it, as it is hatefull. Now in the nature of things, the greatest sin deserveth the greatest abomination, and aversation from it. Therefore, he who truly hateth sin, he hates the greatest sin most of all. Those therefore that are very nice in lesse matters, and loose in greater things, it is but hypocrisie: for he who truely hates sin as sin, where the greatest sin is, thither he directs the edge of his hatred, which is the strongliest carried against the strongest ill. And such a one will not respect persons in evill; but wheresoever he findeth it, if he have a calling, there will be an answerable hatred of it. Therefore if one be a Minister of the Word of God, he will do as good *Micaiah* did, and will not balke *Ahab* for his greatnesse. And like good *Iohn Baptist*, he will tell *Herod* of his faults, because he hates sinne as sinne; therefore (where he hath a calling to it) he will hate it proportionably in the greatest measure. Good *Ely* in this case, was too indulgent over his sons: but we must love no man so nearely, as to love the ill in them.

1 King. 22.

1 Sam. 2.

6. *If we can endure Reproofes for sin.*

Again, a man may know that he truly hates sin, if he can endure admonition and reproofe for sin.

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He that hates a venemous plant which troubleth the ground, will not be displeased if a man come and tell him that hee hath such a plant in his ground, and will helpe him to dig it up: surely he cannot be displeased with the party. So here if a man doe truly hate sin, will he be angry with him that shall tell him that hee is obnoxious to such an evill which will hurt him dangerously and damne his soule if it be not helpe? surely no: therefore let men pretend what they will, those who swell against private reproofe, they doe not hate sin as sin. Onely adde we this Caution: A Reproofe may be administred with such indiscretion, out of selfe-love, and with a high hand, as that a man may dislike the carnall manner of reproving. But if it be done in a good manner, he that hates reproofe, because hee loveth himselfe and his sin (pretend what he will) he hates not sinne.

7. *Such will not be flattered in their sins.*

So if a man love to be flattered in his sin, it is a signe he hates not sin truly. For there is naturally a great deale of selfe-love in man, which makes him that he loves to bee flattered in his sins: whereupon hee comes to be abused to his owne destruction, especially great men. Now it is a signe of an ill state of soule, to be subject to be abused by flattery, and to hate instruction: (saith *Paul*) *Am I your enemy, because I have told you the Truth.* Gal. 4.16.

8. *If we hate to talke of, or mention it and shun occasions*

Againe, we may know what our hatred to sinne is, by our willingnesse or unwillingnesse to talke of it, or mention it, or to venture upon the

the occasions thereof. Where hatred is, there is outward aversation; we fly from what we hate, and shun to frequent places where wee may receive offence. Whatsoever hath an Antipathy to nature, that we hate and run away from. Therfore those that present themselves to the occasions of sin, upon no calling: say what they will) they feed sin and live according to the flesh: those that hate a thing, will never come neare it if they can choose. Therefore, those that present themselves willingly to places infected, where there is nothiug religious, but scorning of Religion, your common representations of abomination, pretend what they will, their intent is to strengthen their owne corruption, against the good of their soules; this is the issue. Those that hate sin, will hate all that which may leade to it the representations of sin also. Can a man hate sin and see it acted? wickednesse is learned, when one seeth it acted, as one of the Ancients saith well: therefore let us by these and the like tryals take notice what our hatred to sin is.

A limitation for expressing of our hatred to sinne.

Onely this our zeale, and indignation to sin must have a mitigation and be regulated, least like an exorbitant river it exceed the bounds: therefore not to follow the Schoole niceties in the exactnesse of differences, we will touch the marke a little, how this zeale and hatred to sin in reproofe (especially) must be qualified: wherin we must consider divers things.

I. *We must consider our calling to reproove others.*

First, Our calling must be respected, for how-

soever

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soever we must carry an universall hatred to sin, thus far, that we must not do it. Yet in the discovery of hatred and dislike to others, we must consider what calling we have and how farre we go.

2. *It must be with a due respect & keeping of distance to the party reproved.*

And it must bee done with a sweet temper, keeping our distance, and reserving the due respect unto those in whom we shew our dislike. As we see, *Nathan* when he came to tell *David* of his fault, how he doth it, what art he useth, It must so be done, as that it may appeare to be done out of pure zeale, that it is no wilde-fire, nor no heate of nature, but that it commeth meerely from the spirit, and in much love with mildnesse and pitty: in which case it carrieth a wondrous authority. The discovery of hatred to the faults either in a Minister, or in a Magistrate, though they must be truely dealt with, and have their faults told them: yet there must be respect had to their place, by reason of the weakenesse of men. As it is with the body, great men have their Physitians as well as meaner: onely their physicke must be more costly, because (perhaps) of their tendernesse of their constitutions: but as for their bodies, they must not be suffered to perish, nor will not. So for their soules, they must have that which other men have to helpe them: but it must be done with reservation and respect, as *Paul* speaking to *Festus* the Governour, calleth him *most Noble Festus*. &c. Preising also goodnesse (in some sort) upon *King Agrippa*: *O King Agrippa, believest thou the Prophets, I know thou dost* Act. 26.25. Act. 26.27.

So

So we see how wee may examine whether our hatred to sin be true or not.

Let every one therefore make Use of it in their calling; Those that are intrusted with Gods message, let them know that Gods Ambassadours are to be faithfull in their Message; for they serve a greater Lord then is upon the Earth. And let them shew their true hatred of ill, and the danger of sinne whersoever they finde it. And for those that are Governours of others, let them not thinke that they hate sin in themselves, except they hate sin also in all that belong to them and reforme it. For we see here an evidence of conversion: when *Ephraim* was converted. *What have I any more to do with Idols?* and 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. There is an excellent description of the nature of Repentance by many parcels. The *Corinthians* had repented: how is this evidenced? O! *Behold* (saith he) *this selfe same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort; what carefullnesse it wrought in you? yea what clearing of your selves, yea what indignation? yea what feare? yea what vehement desire? yea what zeale? yea what revenge?* what Revenge and Indignation against sin, a kinde of extremity of hatred: a hatred quickned and kindled, the height of hatred. *What Indignation?* Insinuating, that whersoever there is the truth of conversion there will bee indignation against sin in our selves. As *David* confesseth of himselfe having sinned. *So foolish was I and ignorant, I was as a beast before thee.* When he

Psal. 37. 22.

suffered

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ſuffered ſuch a thought to lodge in his breaſt, that it was better with the children of the world, then with the Church of God, he was troubled for it. But when hee went into the Church of God, and ſaw the end of wicked men, then he ſaw his owne fooliſhneſſe in being ſo deceived, and ſpeaks againſt himſelf with indignation. So wherſoever there is true converſion, there is hatred with indignation againſt our ſelves. As in that place before alleadged, they ſhall ſay unto their Idols, *get thee hence:* What have I any more to doe with you? which is a phraſe of ſpeech ſhewing a diſpoſition of hatred to the utmoſt extention. *Get you hence*, So Chriſt to the Divell: *Get thee behinde me Satan.* This is the right temper of a truely converted Chriſtian, expreſt by divers phraſes in Scripture; By a deniall of our luſts, by killing and crucifying, by pulling out the eye, and cutting of the right hand; which phraſes, doe they not imply a great ſtrength of hatred and indignation? when wee muſt as it were pull out our owne eyes: that is our beloved ſinnes, which are as deare to us as our eyes, and as uſefull as our right hands unto us. Yet theſe muſt be cut off, mortified, crucified and denyed. Therefore let us not deceive our ſelves: but let us judge of the truth of our converſion, by our true hatred to ſin in our ſelves and others, and in all who are committed to our charge. Iſa. 30. 22. Col. 3. 5.

If this be ſo, what ſhall we judge of a cold luke-warme temper? It is the nature of cold

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to gather Heterogeniall bodies together. As we ſee in Ice there are ſtraws, and ſtones, and all Heterogeniall things incorporated, becauſe the cold congeales them together. But where there is fire, there is a ſeperating of the droſſe from the good mettall. So where the Spirit of God is, it is not ſo cold as to jumble ſin and ſin, this and that together: but it purgeth away that which is ill, and that which is good it makes better. For in what proportion the fire of Gods Spirit ſtirs up that which is good, in that proportion there is a hatred of that which is ill. They are unparaleld affections. Thoſe that love God they hate evill. Theſe that are alike to all things, doe ſhew that they have not this active true hatred againſt ſin. No, *Ephraim* (*ſhall ſay*) *what have I any more to doe with Idols?*

Queſt. But now how ſhall we come to get this hatred againſt ſin, and holy Revenge and Indignation againſt our ſelves for that which is amiſſe in us.

Anſw. *How wee may come to hate our ſinnes. We muſt get neere communion with God, and a cleare ſight of his excellency.* Exod. 32, 19. Firſt, we muſt every day labour to get a cleerer ſight of the excellency of that which is good, and a neerer communion with God by Prayer and Meditation: and then when we have beene with God, it will worke an abhomination of whatſoever is contrary unto him. Thus *Moſes*, when he had talked with God in the mountaine, at his returne ſeeing them dancing and ſacrificing to the Calfe of gold, what did *Moſes?* he brake the Tables aſunder. So it is with thoſe that have communion

munion with God, who is light it selfe, and in whom is no darknesse, who is Holinesse and purity it selfe: those who have effectually conversed with God in his Ordinances, Meditation, Prayer and the like; when they looke upon sinne which is contrary to God, they looke upon it with a more perfect hatred. So *Esay* 6. When God appeared to the Prophet, and touched his tongue with a coale from the Altar (saith he) *Woe is me for I am undone, because I am a man of uncleane lips,* &c. *for mine eyes have seene the King the Lord of Hosts.* Thus when once he had communion with God, he began to loath himselfe. So if we would hate evill, let us labour more and more to be holy and to increase in that divine affection of love. For in what measure wee love that which is good, in that measure we hate the evill. As it is, *Psal.* 97. 10. *Yee that love the Lord, hate evill.* Insinuating that all that love the Lord hate evill. All those that are neere unto God, they hate all sin: the more they grow into communion with God, the more they grow in the hatred of all that is contrary. Let us therefore never talke of love to God, and of Piety and such like; for if there be any grace or communion with God, we hate all sin in that measure as God hateth; he who hath no zeale to reform that which God hateth, he hath no love at all.

1 Joh. 1. 5.

2. *We must set before us what sin is in it self.*

Again, the way to stir us up to hate sin in our selves and others, & out of that hatred to reforme it, is to set before us, what it is in it selfe: that it

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it is the loathsomest thing in the world, worse then the Divell himself: for it is sin which makes him a Divell. That Corruption, Pride, Worldlines, and Profanesse which we cherish, is worse then the Divell himself, because this made him a Divel. Let us make sin therfore as loathsome as we can, and then wee shall hate it. And let us present it to our soules, as the most dangerous thing of all, the ill of ills, which bringeth all other evills upon us. This may appeare more ugly in our sight, in that the foulenesse thereof could not be expiated, but by the death of the Sonne of God. And consider what great torments he hath prepared for that which we so cherish: this proud sinfull and carnall disposition of ours so opposite to all goodnesse, God hath appointed to punish it with eternall seperation from his presence. It maketh God hate his owne creatures: *Goe ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Divell and his Angels.* Mat. 25.41.

3. *We must consider the dangerous condition of unrepenting sinners.*

And to stir us up to reforme sin in all that belong unto us, we must consider the dangerous condition that they live and die in, in whom this is not reformed, Eternal torments and seperation from God. These things may help to work in our hearts a hatred of sin: and from this hatred, a Reformation of it, with zeale and indignation. Therefore let us labour more and more for this temper of soule, that we may be like God and carry the Characters of the Children of God in us. There is no affection will distin-

guish

guiſh us from hypocrits more then hatred, which commeth of love, which is the firſt borne and breeding affection of all others. For why do we hate any thing, but becauſe it is oppoſite to that we love? why do we hate ill, but becauſe it is oppoſite to God and to Chriſt whom we love? amongſt others, take we along this conſideration with us, that it is the Speare which wounded our bleſſed Saviour, and that it is that he hates moſt, which we love moſt. Conſider the Holineſſe of God that he would puniſh it in his owne ſon, ere it ſhould not be puniſhed.

4. *We muſt conſider it is the bane of all our comforts.*

And conſider that it is the bane of all our comfort, this which we ſo cheriſh, and that it imbitters all things to us. We cannot rejoyce (no not in the good bleſſings of God) whilſt we are guilty of ſin: Neither can wee pray comfortably, whilſt our hearts regard it. In this caſe that which ſhould rejoyce the heart, communion with God is terrible to us. What have I to doe to take his name in my mouth, when I embrace ſuch ſinnes. The day of judgement is terrible alſo, for how can a man thinke comfortably thereof, if therewith he expect a heavy doome for his ſinnes he liveth in? So we may ſay of the day of death, none of theſe can be thought upon without terror, when therewithall it commeth to ones minde the cutting off from their ſins, and the *terrour of the Lord* againſt all ſinne whatſoever. It ſhould be the joy of our hearts to thinke of theſe happy times: therefore there muſt needs be a great

Pſal. 66. 18.

Pſa. 50. 16.

2 Cor. 5. 11.

great deale of ſinne and atheiſme in our hearts, when we cannot thinke comfortably of them. For either we beleeve not theſe things, and ſo are plaine Atheiſts: or elſe, if we beleeve them, we are exceeding fooliſh to looſe future joyes, for the poore *pleaſures of ſinne for a ſeaſon.*

5. *We muſt grow in the love of grace & goodneſſe.*

Let us labour to grow in grace more & more, for the more we grow in the love of God and of good things, the more we ſhall hate ſin: for whatſoever may be ſaid for the growth in love & cheriſhing of it to good things, the ſame may be ſaid for the hatred of ill in a contrary ſenſe.

6. *Change the object to its right oppoſite.*

The laſt helpe ſhall be, to place and drive our affections a contrary way, to tranſlate and place them on a contrary object, when they are ſtirred up to evill attempts. As when *Hatred* is ſtirred up, direct it to its proper object, ſinne: when *Love* is irregular; thinke with our ſelves, that God hath not planted this affection for this object, but to carry me another way: I muſt love God above all, and all that hee loveth for his ſake. Hath God put Love and Hatred into my heart to hate my brother whom I ſhould love, and to love the Divell, and hate God? O no! I ſhould love God above all, and my brother as my ſelfe; and hate the Divell and all his workes, whom I have renounced in my Baptiſme; therefore in diſtempers of the affections, make a diverſion, and turne them the right way. As Phyſitians uſe to doe, when the diſtempered blood runs dangerouſly one way, If they cannot ſtop that, they

they open a veine to drive the courſe of the blood another way. So it is Chriſtian pollicie, when the affections run dangerouſly one way, then to reflect thus upon our ſelves. I but is this the end why God hath placed this affection in me, Certainely no, he hath planted this affection in me for another purpoſe. Therefore I will hate that which I ſhould hate, ſin in generall: and my owne ſinne moſt of all, which makes me hate my brother. This ſhould be our daily taske and ſtudy, to take off the affections where they ſhould not be placed: and to fix them where they ſhould be placed: and there to let them go amaine, the faſter the better; reſtraining them where they ſhould not run our.

Thus we ought to temper our ſelves, and to worke in our ſelves as much as may be a ſound hatred to all ſin, not only of the ſecond table, but of the firſt alſo. The Church here ſaith, *What have I any more to doe with Idols?* Now I hate all vaine inventions. And thinke not with *Gallio*, that this belongethn not to us, if we be Magiſtrates and called to it, to ſtand for the cauſe of the Church and true Religion.

What have I any more to doe with Idols?

The laſt thing to be obſerved from *Ephraims manner* of expreſſing his indignation is,

That where love is not well contracted and brgunne, it will not hold to the end, but will end in eternall hatred.

Obſerv.

That all wicked leagues muſt end in everlaſting hatred.

The *Serpent* and *Hevah* had ſome poore acquaintance together (as the iſſue proved.) What

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did it end in? *The ſeed of the woman ſhall breake the Serpents head.* This aſſociation and acquaintance ended in everlaſting warre and breach. So all covenants, leagues and aſſociations with thoſe wee ſhould not joyne with, can never ſoder handſomely together but will end in everlaſting hatred. What a ſtrict league was in former times betwixt *Ephraim* and *Idols*? But when *Ephraims* eyes are opened to ſee his *Idols*, Divels, he deteſts and loaths all abominations; and is of another mind; *what have I any more to do with Idols?* he abominates thē, as the word importeth.

Gen. 3. 15.

That naughty aſſociation and leagues cauſes a miſerable rent in the affections.

Let us therefore beware with whom wee joyne in intimate league. For what makes miſerable ſo much, as the renting of the affections from that they were ſtrongly placed on; when love is rent from the thing beloved. If we place our affections (for ſome bie reſpects) upon wicked perſons, this will cauſe ſo much the more torment and indignation againſt our ſelves, that we were ſo fooliſh to ſuffer our affections to enter ſo deepely where they ſhould not. Thoſe that glory in their league with Antichriſt, and wonder at the Beaſt, thinking him a Demy-god: will this be alway ſo? O no, when GOD opens the eyes of any of his people, they ſhall hate them for ever. So wicked perſons that now are led on to this and that wicked courſe, ſhall this bee alwayes ſo? Woe to thee if it bee: but the time may come that thou ſhalt ſay, *What have I any more to do: with Idols*, or with

Rev. 17. 12, 16

with ſuch an ones acquaintance? I cannot indure to looke on him, he tainted me, and miſled me, and tempted me: now we muſt be two, part we muſt, and I would we had never met together. Therefore before we place our affections on any, conſider who they be; whether we be likely to live with them for ever or not? whether there be any evidence of grace in them. If not, let them be two to us; for whatſoever vanity is in the things or Perſons we love, if we belong to God wee muſt bee ſeperate from them, unleſſe we will be damned. Therefore we muſt be wiſe to prevent the danger betimes. *Ephraim* might have knowne before the danger of Idolatry had he bin wiſe, and prudent; but it is well he knows it now at length, which cauſeth him ſo to abhominate *Idols: What have I any more to doe with Idols?* This much is ſpoken becauſe of the luke-warmenes and cold temper, neutrality and halting of a great many in the world: having ſo many ſinfull combinations, and aſſociations one with another, as if theſe things were not materiall.

A conſideration in choice of company.

Now let men conſider what a diſpoſition this is, and how it ſtands with that diſpoſition which muſt bee in thoſe that are members of Chriſt, and looke for Heaven. Let a Chriſtian alwayes remember what he is, and what he hopes for, and this will put him in a right temper. 1. What he is, a King, and an heire of Heaven, &c. After which hee ſhould reaſon with good *Nehemiah*, *Shall ſuch a man as I flie?* ſhall Nehe. 6, 11.

That a reflection of what wee are and hope for is a meanes to preſerve a right temper.

ſhall ſuch a man as I doe this? I am redeemed from my ſins and advanced to be a King, to rule over my luſts, to be an heire of heaven and eternall happineſſe in the world to come, to raigne with Chriſt, and ſhall I do thus and thus? Doth this ſtand with my new temper, this ſin, this filthineſſe, this baſe action and thoughts, that I am tempted to and incumbered with. Shall ſuch a man as I follow theſe baſe actions, wayes and companions? conſider we this well, and then it will breed *Ephraims* Reſolution, *What have I any more to doe with this baſe luſt?* what hath it to doe with me? or I with it? Is this and this action befitting a King and an heire of heaven, and a new creature? and if a man be in Authority, then let him conſider what *Mordecai* ſaid to *Heſter*; *What if thou be called to the Kingdome for ſuch a purpoſe.* What if thou be called to this place or dignity for this purpoſe? to reforme ſuch and ſuch abuſes. Think with thy ſelfe, not only in particular what thou art; but in thy place, what if thou be called to reforme ſuch abuſes? ſuch unſound doctrines? to ſtand for God and for the truth. This will breed this reſolute indignation of *Ephraim* in us; *What have I any more to doe with Idols?* All which is for the manner of *Ephraims indignation*: A ſtrong negation of an abhominated thing: *What have I any more to doe*, &c. The next, which is the *Subſtance* and *Matter* abhominated [*Idolatry*] muſt be reſerved for ſome other time.

Heſt. 4. 14.

The end of the tenth Sermon.

THE ELEVENTH SERMON.

Hos. 14. 8.

Ephraim shall say, what have I any more to do with Idols? I have heard him and observed him: I am like a greene firre-tree, from me is thy fruit found.

WEE have heard at severall times heeretofore, how gratiously GOD deales with his people, alluring them by many free and gratious Promises to his service, the particulars wherof, we heard here ofore at large. This 9. ver, hath reference unto that which went before

before, *Ver.* 3. There *Ephraim* renounceth his former Idols. *Aſhur ſhall not ſave us*, &c. and here *Ephraim ſhall ſay, what have I any more to doe with Idols?* unto which the anſwer is, *I have heard him, and obſerved him; I am like a greene firre-tree unto him: from me is thy fruit found.* Now in that *Ephraim ſhall ſay, what have I any more to doe with Idols?* This in ſumme is onely the firſt part of the third Verſe repeated in another manner: that *Ephraim* ſhall and will goe on in abhominating *Idols*, be conſtant in his former reſolution. Therefore in that *Ephraim* ſhall by the Spirit of grace, go on in renouncing all falſe confidence, God ſheweth here that *Ephraim* ſhall looſe nothing by it (for he intends here the continuance of time) *I have heard him*, and I doe heare him, and I will heare him and reſpect him, and be like a ſhady greene firre-tree to ſhade him, cauſing him him alſo to be aboundant in fruit, *From me is thy fruit found.*

Ephraim ſhall ſay, what have I any more to doe with Idols: here we conſidered *the manner of expreſſion*, and then the *Matter* it ſelfe.

Ephraim ſhall ſay, what have I any more to doe with Idols?

To come therefore to the *Matter* it ſelfe ſpecified (*Idolatry*) againſt which *Ephraims* indignation is directed:

What have I to doe with Idols?

In handling whereof we muſt take in all theſe foure together, that is,

1. *Falſe*

1. *Falſe Doctrine*, which is the foundation of *Idolatry*.

2. *Idols themſelves*: or,

3. *Idolatry*, which they tend to (for hee which hates *Idols*, hates them, becauſe he hates *Idolatry*) or,

4. *Idolaters*, as if he had ſaid,

What have I any more to doe with *Idolatrous Doctrines*, opinions or conceits: or with *Idols* framed according to theſe conceits: or with *Idolatry or Idolaters?* For theſe goe together, no man worſhips *Idols*, but becauſe hee is poiſoned in his conceits: and *Idols* are forbidden, becauſe *Idolatry* is dangerous, and communion with *Idolaters* is forbidden, becauſe of *Idolatry*. So that the *Doctrine*, *Idols*, *Idolatry* and *Communion with them*, all theſe are objects of *Ephraims* abhomination and indignation.

Ephraim (ſhall ſay) what have I any more to do with Idols?

It were to miſ-ſpend pretious time (appointed for better uſes) to tell you of the abominable diſtinctions of the Papiſts of *Latria* and *Dulia*, or to inſiſt upon a diſcourſe of Heatheniſh Idolatry: Truthes, but not ſo profitable for us to ſpend time in. Therefore we will rather come to ſhew the Reaſons, why *Ephraim* ſo abhorreth Idolatry, Idols, and conceits of all.

I. *Reaſons of Ephraims hatred unto Idols.*

To begin in the firſt place with Idols; when *Ephraim* is truely converted, he hates them, becauſe Idols are abhominable to God, unto whom *Ephraim* is now converted. *Ephraim* hates

I. *Becauſe they are abhominable unto God*

hates *Idols* for *Idolatry* is ſpirituall Adultery, Religion is as it were a conjugall act of marriage, ſo that a breach in religious worſhip, is a breach of ſpirituall marriage. Now the worſhipping of *Idols* being a breach of the conjugall act of marriage betwixt God and the ſoule, ſpirituall Adultery, it muſt needs be abhominable. For Adultery is an abhominable filthy thing; much more ſpirituall adultery: therfore (ſaith *Ephraim*) *What have I now any more to doe with Idols.*

2. *Becauſe Idolatry frames baſe conceits of God*

And then againe, Idolatry frameth baſe conceits of God: whereas on the contrary we ſhould elevate and raiſe up our hearts unto him, Idolatry puls him downe and conformes him to our baſe conceits. Were it not a wrong to man, to make him like a Swine, or an Ape or ſome ſuch ridiculous creature? who in this caſe would thinke himſelfe well uſed? there is not ſuch diſproportion betwixt any creature and man, as there is betwixt the great God of Heaven and Earth and the beſt creature that can be made to reſemble him. Therefore it is an abhominable abuſe and diſhonour to the great Majeſty of God to be repreſented any kinde of way.

3. *Becauſe they are oppoſite to God.*

Againe, Conſider the oppoſition betweene any repreſentation of God, and God: they are corruptible things, God is incorruptible; they are viſible, God is inviſible: they are vaine and nothing; God a being of himſelfe, who giveth being unto all things. God is the living God, and the cauſe of all life. To be brief,

brief, the Scripture to ſhew Gods hatred of them, calleth them dung-hill gods, and (*Abell*) as it is in this booke, *vanity*, *nothing*, a name to alienate the affections from them.

Yea further, becauſe God is a Jealous God, and will not give his glory to another. *Ephraim* therefore as ſoone as he commeth to know God, he hateth Idols, becauſe he knows God being a Iealous God could not endure them. 4. Exod. 34. *Becauſe God is a Iealous God.* Iſa 42.8.

Now Idolatry is committed, when either we ſet up falſe gods in place of the true God, or when we worſhip the true God in a falſe manner. *How Idolatry is committed.*

But now another Queſtion may be mooved, whether the Papiſts be Idolaters or not? For we live amongſt many of them; therefore we cannot be to wary of them. *Queſt.*

The Anſwer is affirmative; they are Idolaters, and worſe in ſome ſort then the Heathen Idolaters were: Onely change the names of the Popiſh Saints which they in *Popery* worſhip, and the names that the Heathen worſhip, and they will be all one. Now names be no Realities. *Anſw.* *Papiſts proved to be Idolaters.*

How may this be cleared?

First, they give the honour due to God to others, which is Idolatry, the religious worſhip only due unto God they give unto other things. Chriſt when he ſaid, *him onely ſhalt thou ſerve*: excepted the leaſt divine worſhip from the creature. The Divell we know would have had him fall downe before him: but Chriſts 1. *Becauſe they give the honour due unto God unto others.* Mat 4.

anſwer

anſwer is, *Him only ſhalt thou ſerve*; that is him only ſhalt thou religiouſly proſtrate thy ſelfe unto; ſo that religious worſhip is proper to God only. Now this they give to Saints, for they pray to them, which is a religious worſhip.

Object. But they object, that they pray not directly to them: but to them as Mediators, that they may pray to Chriſt for them.

Anſw. 1. Firſt, they raiſe them above their degree to make them mediators, and ſo dethrone Chriſt of his office of Mediator, at leaſt joyne copartners with him.

But this is not all, they pray directly to Saints, to help them againſt ſeverall ils (as they have ſeverall Saints, for ſeverall evils) whatſoever they ſay who are not aſhamed of lying to further their deſignes, yet their books and writings doe teſtifie the contrary.

Then againe they vow to Saints, as in the forme of their vowes is ſeene; *I vow to the Virgin Mary*, &c. Now a vow is a religious act. They vow to Saints, and burne incenſe unto them, erect Temples, and ſet a part daies for their worſhip, and ſo breake all the foure Commandements of the firſt Table. In a good faſhion it is not unfit to remember them, that their memoriall may be kept: but we are not to worſhip them.

And beſides Saints, they have other falſe gods: for their head of the Church is an abhominable Idoll, unto whom they aſcribe that which is proper unto Chriſt, to be the head of

of the Church, which hath no influence from him, but all from Christ the spirituall head thereof. Therefore the Apostle complaineth of such: *who hold not the head, &c.* Those of the Romish Church, *hold not the head*, hold not Christ, because they attribute that to Saints and men, which is proper to Christ onely. They make the Pope the judge of all controversies, who must give authority to the word, and determine Scripture to be Scripture, what a shamefull thing is this to make him judge of the Scriptures which must judge him at the last day? A pitifull thing it is, to see *men of sense* goe about to judge the righteous law of God, and to determine of that which must ere long determine him unto eternall torments, without particular repentance. Yet being spiritually drunke, this folly they are given too, that they will be judge of that which must be judge of them. Many waies they make him an Idoll, ascribing that to him which is proper to Christ.

So likewise, they make their Sacraments to be Idols; for they ascribe to the water in Baptisme power of conferring grace. Now grace is Gods creature onely, for all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth cannot conferre the least dram of grace; it is a thing of Gods making. Now to raise an element to conferre grace, and then to trust in it, *ex opere operato*, for the conferring of it, is to make an *Idoll* of it. And for the Bread; none of all the *Heathens* ever had such an abhominable *Idoll* as the

Y Masse,

SERM. XI.

Col. 2. 19.

1. *Baptisme.*

2. *The Bread in the Lords Supper.*

Maſſe, a breaden god: for they worſhipped living creatures, and there is not the worſt living creature, but it is better then a peece of bread; and yet they worſhip that, for (by their owne confeſſion) if the intention of the Prieſt be not to the action, there is nothing but bread. How may the minds then of men be tormented, when they may or ſhall think, perhaps the Prieſt hath no ſuch intention? and ſo are in danger of Idolatry. For, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, *Their ſorrowes ſhall be multiplied that haſten after another god*, &c. So certainely the ſorrowes and ſcruples of thoſe that are Idolaters ſhall be multiplyed, they cannot but bee much tormented in ſoule ſometimes. *Coſter* himſelfe a forward Jeſuite acknowledgeth, *That if (upon the words of Conſecration) the Bread bee not turned and tranſubſtantiated into the body of Chriſt, we are the moſt abhominable Idolaters of the world.* But we make the *Minor* and *Aſſumption* (long ſince proved by the late worthies of our Church) but there is no ſuch tranſubſtantiating of the Bread into the Body of Chriſt: therefore by their owne conſent they are the moſt abhominable Idolaters of the world, worſe then the Heathen.

Pſ. 16. 4.

B. Iewell. D. Rainolds. D. Fulke. D. Whitaker. D. Willet. Perkins, &c.

And in their equalizing traditions (which are but the inventions of mans braine) with the Scriptures: They commit Idolatry, in that they make their very Church an Idoll. But what ſhould we ſpeake of their Church, when they have the Pope who is their Church vertually: for what is ſaid of the one may be ſaid

of

Sect. XI.

of the other. When they come to the issue, the Church is nothing but the Pope; whatsoever their Church or Counsels say, hee is the whole Church. Many wayes they are grosse Idolaters, especially the common-people: for though they say they give not *Latria*, worship to the Image, but *Dulia*, service. But can the common-people distinguish, who give worship to all alike? To say we worship not the Image, but God before the Image, was the Heathens excuse, as we may see in *Arnobius*. Can the common-people distinguish? no, for they are ignorant Images themselves, in this they are worse then the Heathens, because they have more light, and still the more light, the more sin. For they have bin fore-told, that the whore of *Rome* should be the mother of all fornications, the spirituall *Babylon*, *Sodom* and *Egypt*, in regard of Idolatry, the mother of all these abhominations. Now for them who have bin forewarned hereof, and in so much light still to continue Idolaters, and persist in false worship, is to be worse then the Heathens, who had not the like light and warning. Revel. 17.5.

But what is the reason that they are so impudent and audacious? *Quest.*

First (to answer with the Scriptures) they are drunke with the whores cup, and we know a drunken man dares doe any thing. *Answ.* 1. Revel. 17.2.

And then againe, (as the *Psalmist* speakes) because those who worship Idols become blockish and stupid like unto them, for an I- *Answ.* 2.

Serm. XI.

doll is a blockish dead thing. So Idolaters are stupid dead things in a sort, who are seldome converted; partly because they are drunke, and partly because they are stupid, like the Idols they worship.

Psal. 115. 8.

Vse. 1. If this be so, as it is too true to the eye of the whole world, then how ought we to blesse God, who hath brought us out of this palpable *Ægyptian* darkenesse, out of spirituall *Sodome*, as *Lot* was out of that *Sodome*: O we cannot be thankfull enough, nor ought we to desire to returne to *Sodome* againe, or unto *Ægypt*. Where then is place left for neutrality? those neuters that will be of neither Religion? Is such a disposition from the Spirit of God, which maketh *Ephraim* say here, *what have I any more to doe with Idols?* *Ephraim* would not be a neuter, therfore what shall we say unto them that present themselves to *Masses* in their travels especially; is this to say with *Ephraim*, *what have I any more to doe with Idols?* we must believe with the heart, and confesse with the mouth to salvation: if a man might escape with having his heart to Godwards and his body prostrate, where were confession? In *Elyas* time, God told him, that there were left seven thousand in *Israel*, who had not bowed the knee to *Baal*, that is, who made no bodily prostration. Therfore as the Papists doe not joyn with us, so neither ought we with them, if we hold the contrary Religion false: in this case we should not present our selves with them in any service.

Gen. 19.

Rom. 10. 9.

1 King. 19. 18.

Againe,

Againe, if this be true, what do we think of reconcilers of Religion? a thing impossible, as the Apostle sheweth, *For what communion hath God with Belial? Christ with Antichrist? what communion?* The Question is a strong negation, as that of *Ephraim* here: *What have I now any more to do with Idols?* *Vse 2.* 2 Cor. 6. 14, 15

But some may say we differ from them onely in circumstance. *Object.*

We may aske any man who hath braines in his head, whether Idolatry be a circumstance or not: it being cleare that they are as great Idolaters as the Heathens in many instances. If any affirme that Idolatry is a circumstance, there is no disputing with such a one. That which is the sin which makes God abhorre and desert his own people, is that a circumstance? is that a circumstance which is the chiefe sin against the first Table? Granting that they are Idolaters, that the *Pope* is *Antichrist*, and *Rome* to be *Babylon*, and *Babylon* to be the *mother of all fornication*. This must needs follow, that there can be no reconciling of these two Religions; we may come neere them, and become Papists, but they will never come neere us to be good Christians. *Answ.*

Againe, if this be so that Popery be Idolatry, and that we must beware of all Idolatry, let us take heed therefore that we have nothing to doe with them more then we must needs. Converse with them in our callings wee may, because (as an ancient Father saith) we be copossessors of the world, and not of Religion: *Vse 3.*

we muſt go out of the world if we will not have to do with them ſometimes in the places where we live, but amity is very dangerous with ſuch; the Scripture runs much upon it, ſhould we love them whom God hates. It was *Eves* fault, that without a calling ſhe ventured to talke with the Serpent, we ſhould therefore ſhun converſing and parly with them as much as may be. As there were raiſes ſet about Mount *Sinai*, to keep off the people from touching the Mountaine; ſo God hath ſet hedges about the ſecond Commandement, to keepe us off from offending in it: as it was uſuall with God in this kind. As when he would keepe them farre from *murder*, he forbad them to kill the damme with the young, and not to ſeeth a kid in his mothers milke, onely to reſtraine them from murder that abhominable ſin; ſuch precepts the *Iewes* call *the hedges of the Commandements*. So for *Idolatry*, the Scripture would have us *hate the garment ſpotted with the fleſh, to defile the Coverings of the Images; to account them as a menſtruous cloath, &c.* and *to have nothing to doe with the unfruitfull workes of darkeneſſe*. To hate all monuments of Idolatry. As *Auguſtine* ſaith of monuments; *any monument moves and ſtirs up the mind*: So any thing that may move or ſtirre us to Idolatry, we ſhould abhorre and keepe a farre off from it.

Deut. 22. 6. Exod. 23. 19.

Jude ver. 23. Iſa. 30. 22. Eph. 5. 11.

And therefore the Commandements are ſet downe in the higheſt pitch of the ſinne, to ſhew that we ſhould avoid all the degrees under that

which

which leads to so great a breach, and that we should hate all those steps and leadings to the sinne it selfe. We should therefore beware of Popish writers, and do with them as was done with the Magick books in the *Acts*; burne them all least they corrupt our selves and others. Learne we this of the Papists, who hate our books, burn them, or locke them up safe: yea hate the very Names of *Luther* and *Calvin*, much more their books. Act. 19. 19.

In this case it is with the soule of man, as with water that relisheth of that soyle through which it runs: if it run through a hot soyle, as bathes through a sulphury soyle, it tasts of that. So the spirit of a man tasts of those authors hee runnes through. Therfore such who converse much in Popish writings (unlesse Ministers who have a calling that way to confute them) are in danger to be ensnared by them. *That a mans spirit tasts of the Authors he is most conversant in.*

And then againe, if we must hate all Idolatry, we must take heed of occasions. Not like some looser Christians, which make no matter of crucifixes: how doth the Spirit of *Ephraim* here agree with such? a crucifix is but a teacher of lies, representing onely the outside and that falsly: for there is no expression in Scripture what kind of man Christ was. And if there were, yet the Apostle sheweth, *That we must now no more know him any more after the flesh*: Not as such a man, as tall and faire, &c. But know him as the Mediator, as King of Heaven and Earth, avoiding all lewd base conceits of *Vse* 4. 2 Cor. 5. 16.

of him: people in this kind are too bold, and run too neere Popery. A Father saith well, *No man is safe that is neare to danger.* We are commanded to fly from *Idolatry*, we must not come neare the pits brinke, least we fall in; runne and flie from it as from a Serpent, dally not with the occasions.

1 Cor. 10. 14.

The more close Idolatries of many Christians

But to leave this grosse *Idolatry*, to speake of something which more neerely concerneth us, and which we are prone to: though we hate these grosse Idolatries, yet there be some we are more neerly addicted to: as,

I. *To have false conceptions of God.*

First of all, there is a proneness in us in our worship to conceive false conceptions and *Ideas* of God, and so in place of worshipping God, we worship an *Idoll* of our own brain.

Quest. It may be said, How shall we conceive of God when we worship him?

Answ. 1. *We must not conceive of God as of a finite essence.*

First of all, Negatively, do not dishonour God in imagining any character of an infinite incomprehensible God, but conceive of him, as an infinite essence.

2. *We must conceive of God distinguished in three Persons.*

And then conceive not absolutely of God, but of God distinguished in three Persons, The Father, Sonne, and Holy Ghost, or else wee conceive an Idoll. For there are three Persons in one common nature, and in our Prayers we must not conceive the Nature without the Persons.

3. *Wee must not conceive of God without Christ*

In the third place, we must not in our Prayers conceive of God without Christ the Mediatour. For even as God was only to be knowne and

spoken to towards the Tabernacle: so Christ is the Tabernacle, now where God manifests his gracious presence, and will be worshipped in him the Mediator. For God considered out of Christ is a consuming fire: without Christ no converse with God. Let us therefore take Christ along with us, when we go to God, go to him by God in our Nature, our *Immanuell*, and so we shall conceive of God aright, and not worship an *Idoll* of our own braine.

4. *It is Idolatry to transforme God like to us in affections.*

Againe, there is another thing which is a common abuse among Christians, wherein they come neere to *Idolatry*, when they transforme God to be like themselves in their affections, as it is the property of all unregenerate men to doe so. *Idolatry* is so naturall it cannot but transforme God to be like it selfe, as for instance, A man that is not a gracious man, in the pride of his sinnefull course, thinkes that God is like unto him: *Thou thoughtest that I was like unto thy selfe: therefore I will come against thee, &c.* Psal. 50. 21. As oppressors and such who grow great by ill courses, they justifie this much: would God let me alone if he did not approove of my courses? so they make God like themselves. And so the good-fellowes of the world, they make God to allow all their dissolutenesse, because he lets them alone. So those that are fierce and cruell by nature, who delight in cruelty, vexation and blood, they transforme God as though he delighted in such things, and make him a God of blood. So others transforme

forme God to be all mercy: this is to make God an Idoll, and as ill as if they transformed him into this and that creature, worſe then the *Heathens*, in regard of their light under the Goſpell, yet this is the diſpoſition of many Chriſtians now a dayes.

Queſt. What was the reaſon why the Heathens worſhipped *Bacchus* and *Venus*, ſuch abhominable gods?

Anſw. They to countenance their luſts and drunkenneſſe deifie them; an abhominable ſin of the Heathen, for which God gave them up to other ſins. Doth not our ſin come neare theirs, when we make God to countenance our ſin, and cite Scripture for it, as if God did countenance ſin in his word, this is to transforme God into our own abhominable conceits. Thoſe therefore who bleſſe themſelves in any ſinfull courſe, they are guilty of Idolatry in the worſt kind that may be: for it is as ill to transforme God to allow of ſuch courſes, as to transforme Chriſt to die for ſuch who goe on in their ſins without remorſe, or to transform him into the likeneſſe of ſuch and ſuch vile creatures.

3. *It is Idolatry to ſet ſomewhat up above God in our ſoules.* Further there is another ſort of Idolatry Chriſtians are ſubject unto, to ſet up ſomewhat in their hearts higher then God, there is no man without grace, but he doth ſo untill his converſion. Nay, when a man is converted, he is prone to this, to Idolize and ſet up ſomething above that which ſhould be in the heart. Hereupon *Paul* calleth *Covetouſneſſe* Col. 3.5.

Idola-

Idolatry: becauſe a covetous man placeth thoſe affections upon his owne wealth, which ſhould dwell in God: for, *he ſaith to the wedge of gold, thou art my confidence*; thinking his wealth ſhall beare him out in any ill cauſe whatſoever. And then againe, that time which he ſhould ſpend in thinking of God and of a better life, he burieth thoſe thoughts in his muck and wealth, toyling and moyling in the world, when hee ſhould ſerve God. Thus the covetous man is an Idolater.

Job 31.24.

And there are ſome guilty of Idolatry likewiſe in another kind, ſuch as have mens perſons too much in admiration; that deifie them, eſpecially if they be in great place, ſuch who will offend God before they will offend them, and whereas for Gods glory they ſhould deny themſelves: they deny themſelves and make themſelves fooles for men; and to pleaſe them by whom they hope to riſe, deny both wit and honeſty. This is abhominable Idolatry, and ſuch are as farre from Heaven and ſalvation, as thoſe that fall before an Idoll, if they repent not. O! if theſe men that ſtudy to pleaſe men and deny themſelves for them, would be as carefull to pleaſe God as they have beene to pleaſe men, how happy, and what excellent Chriſtians would they be. As a great man pleaſer in his time ſaid; *If he had ſerved God as well as he had ſerved his maſter the King in that time; God had not left him ſo in his old yeares.* To ſet up any man ſo high in our affections,

4. *Such commit Idolatry who have mens perſons too much in admiration.*

A Scottiſh Regent before his execution.

as for him to deny our selves, cracke our consciences, and doe things unlawfull, will bee misery in the end. *If I please men* (saith *Paul*) *I am not the servant of Christ.* He meaneth sinfull pleasing, for there ought to be service and respect, due honour must be given unto those who carry Gods Image, our Governours; yea great respect and honour, and nothing in this kind can be too much; but to goe beyond our bounds herein, is to commit *Idolatry*. As the *Heathen* did, when the government of *Rome* was turned into an Empire, some of their Emperors were made gods by them after *Augustus* time, wherin they could not have devised to have done them greater wrong, for they all came most of them to fearefull ends. It is ill for any man to have God his corrivall, for no greater misery can befall a man then to be set up in Gods roome, so to rule a mans honesty, will, and conscience at his pleasure; for God is a jealous God, and will not endure such *Idolatry*.

Gal. 1. 10.

5. *Such Idolize who professing Christ will not suffer any thing for his sake.*

And so in the next place, they frame Christ an *Idoll*, in taking him without his crosse; they will be of the true Religion, but when they come to suffer any thing, if it be but a frowne, a reproach or disgrace, they give out and fall backe. Such they frame to themselves an *Idoll*; a false Christ: for the knowledge of Christ is never without the Crosse, some crosse or other, some persecution or other in some kinde. *All who will live godly in Christ shall suffer persecution.* A man may live godly, and

2 Tim. 3. 12.

not

not suffer persecution, but he that will live godly in Christ, so as he sheweth his nature to be altered, carrying an Antipathy against all false courses, and so as the world may conceive that hee is such an one, it is impossible that he should live in the world without persecution: because hee shall meete with those that are of an opposite disposition. Therfore to frame a smooth Christ, all comfort, is to frame a false Christ and a false Religion, to frame an Idoll that hath no truth in it, that never was, nor never will be to the end of the world.

Against, unconverted persons (especially) are prone to another Idolatry, to set up their owne wits and wils instead of Gods. So as there is not a greater enemy to Religion then our owne conceits and wills, which will have a modell of Religion of our owne braine, which must stand, let what will come of it. This is the fault especially of great learned persons who take upon them conceits and apprehensions of things, and then dote upon these brats of their owne braine. And so for will, to have our owne will in all things, as the speech is, *My mind to me a kingdome is*: I will have my will, what soever come of it. This is Idolatry, for whosoever will come to Heaven, must deny his will. The first lesson in Christs Schoole is selfe denyall, Deniall of wit and will, to have no more wit and wisedome, especially in divine things then God will teach us: and no more will, which is distinct and opposite to Christs

6. *Idolatry is committed when we set up our owne wits and wils instead of Gods.*

Mat. 16. 24.

Chriſts will, but to bring our wils to his in all things. When men will goe about great affaires, and ſet upon things in their owne wit and ſtrength, never praying nor depending upon God for a bleſſing, this is a kind of Idolizing of parts, to worke our things by pollicy, ſtrength, wits and parts. As that Heathen Atheiſt could ſay, *Let cowards pray if they will*: but his ſucceſſe was anſwerable. So is it not the common Atheiſme of the world, they goe about things in confidence of their wit and parts, and ſo hope to attain a glorious iſſue: whereas God who overthrowes *Babels*, takes delight to confound all their devices, it is his daily practice, *To ſend the rich empty away, and exalt the humble and meeke*. Luk. 1. 52. Thoſe who ſet upon things raſhly without prayer, as though they were Lords of all, and without dependance upon God, promiſing themſelves good ſucceſſe, they make Idols of themſelves: as a proud man is an Idoll, *hee worſhips himſelfe*, whileſt hee leanes to his owne wit, plots and parts; carnall men thus Idolize themſelves.

7. *Idolatry is committed by truſting to the performances and taſks of Religion.*

Againe, you have ſome who are none of the worſt, who commit this great ſinne of Idolatry by truſting to the outward performances and taskes of Religion, thinking that God muſt needs be bound unto them when they have done ſo many taskes, read and praid, or heard ſo many Sermons, or done a good deed. But here lyeth the ſpirituall ſubtilty, in that they ſet up theſe things too high, when if they find not

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not that successe they looke for, then they inwardly murmur against God: when rather all these things should be done with a spirit of Humilitie and subjection, using them only as meanes whereupon we expect Gods blessing, craving his assistance and strength to doe them in a holy and a self-denying manner: when we doe otherwise, and trust to the outward taskes and performances wee doe, wee make them Idols. And you have many that go along with outward performances, who never come to a dram of grace, because they trust to the outward performances, and looke not to the life and soule of them, which is the Spirit of God assisting, quickning, strengthning, blessing them. The life of a Christian is a perpetuall dependance upon God in the use of meanes; and not an Idolizing of them, to be carelesse when he hath done his taske.

8. *It is Idolatry so to trust to the worke of grace as to neglect justification and acceptation to life everlasting.*

But a more subtill Idolatry then this is of another kind, when we trust too much to the worke of grace, and rely not upon God in Christ in the matter of justification and acceptation to life everlasting, which is a fault both,

1. Before,
2. After Conversion.

In

First, before Conversion. When wee thinke we have not done so much good, and beene sufficiently humbled, and therefore that God will not be mercifull to us: As if Christ must take us with downy of good deeds, or else he cannot, whereas all grace is promised upon

our

our entry and comming into the Covenant of grace, upon our believing, when we come with empty hearts and hands: *The poore* (saith Christ) *receive the Gospell, and those that are lost, Christ is sent to save them, and to call in the weary and heavy laden.*

Mat. 11. 5. Mat. 9 13. Mat. 11. 28.

2. And after Conversion; those that are in the state of grace oftentimes want that comfort in the maine point of justification and acceptation to life everlasting which they should have: because they looke into their imperfections, seeing this and that want, and so are swallowed up of discomfort; whereas if we had all the graces in the world, yet we must live by Faith, relying upon the merits of Christ. For our good workes bring us not to Heaven as a cause, but onely are helpes and comforts to us in our walking to Heaven. For if wee had all the sinnes of all men, yet Christs all-sufficient Righteousnesse is sufficient for to do them all away, if wee can goe out of our selves, and cleave to that. Therefore in trouble of conscience, we must not looke either to our good or our ill, but to Gods infinite Mercy, and to the infinite satisfaction of our blessed Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, there as it were loosing our selves, seeing our sinnes as mountaines drowned in the infinite Sea of his Mercy. The blood of Christ, that will pacifie and stay the conscience, nothing els can give rest to our soules. If we looke to our workes and to the measure of our sanctification, what saith holy

Paul

Paul in the like case? *Yea doubtlesse, and I count all things but losse, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Iesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the losse of all things, and doe count them but dung that I may winne Christ*, even his Righteousnesse and best works; therefore there is no regard to be had of them in that case. Wherefore when wee would speake comfort to a distressed conscience, wee must not looke to his ill or good, but to the command. *This is his command that we believe*, and looke to the allsufficiencie of God in Christ, and the promises, whereby we honour God in giving him the glory of his truth, and depart with comfort. Therefore though wee hate grosse Idolatry, yet we see there are many wayes wherein the soule may bee seduced, whereby we may come very neere that sinne which our soule hateth; by trusting too much to something out of God.

Phil. 3. 8.

1 Joh. 3. 23.

If then the case be thus, how shall we come to reforme it (for a *Use of Direction*) so as to flie from all Idolatrie, and to say with *Ephraim*, *What have I now any more to doe with Idols?*

Vse 5. How to reforme our selves so as to flie from Idolatry.

First of all doe but consider Gods hatred unto all sorts of Idolaters: for he accounts such to hate him, and so accordingly punisheth them. In the second Commandement those that are given to Idolatrie in any kinde, are such as hate God, which is a horrible thing, and yet notwithstanding this is the disposition of all such as are Idolaters, so farre forth as they

1.

Sam. XI.

they are Idolaters they hate God: for the more we know God, the more we shall hate all Idols, *What have I now any more to doe with Idols?*

2. Labour to grow in the sound knowledge of God and of Christ, and of their all-sufficiency. Marke S. *Paules* method, *Coloss.* 2. and in other places, when hee would draw us from all outward things, he speakes gloriously of the fullnesse of Christ. *In him dwelleth all the fullnesse of the God head bodily:* and, *In him you are compleat.* When he would draw them from, *touch not, taste not, handle not, worshipping of Angels, and from counterfeit humility,* hee labours to dispossesse them of these Idolatrous conceits, and to possesse them of the fullnesse of Christ. If in him we have fullnesse, why should we looke for any thing out of him? If we be compleat in him, If all fullnesse be in him, why does wee seeke any thing out of that fullnesse? Thus the holy Apostle shutteth up his first Epistle, *Babes keepe you from Idols.* What is promised there? Christ is eternall life, all is in him, whereupon presently comes this, *Babes keepe you from Idols.* If life and happinesse and all be in Christ, if we be compleate in him, and the fullnesse of all be in him, why should we goe out of him for any thing? When God would perswade *Abraham* to leave all Idolatrie, and all things else, to depend wholly upon him, what doth he first possesse him with? *I am God all sufficient,* &c. know God in covenant all-sufficient, and Christ in the fullnesse of his high perfections as media-

Col. 2. 9.

1 Joh. 5. 21.

Gen. 17. 1.

tor,

tor, in whom is all fullnesse and life eternall, in whom we are complcat: we shall then be so farre from going out of him for any thing, as we shall be of the same mind with *Ephraim*, What have I now any more to doe with other Intercessors and Mediators? what have I to doe with will-worship, what need I goe to other cursed meanes, when God is all-sufficient? It is the scope of the new covenant of grace that wee should glory in God onely, who hath made Christ unto us, *Wisdome, Righteousnesse, Sanctification* and *Redemption*. And all this, because that whosoever glorieth in him should not goe out of him for any thing. The more we know therefore the fullnesse of Christ, and Gods mercy in him, the more wee shall abhorre all Idolatry, with the kindes and degrees of it.

The scope of the new covenant. 1 Cor. 1. 30

Another helpe and meanes to cure this disposition in us is, to know that we are naturally wondrous prone to it in one degree or another. It is reckoned up, *Gal.* 5. as a worke of the flesh, and naturally man hath a working fancy, to set up somewhat in his heart and understanding above, and besides God; Imaginations to adulterate things. Men live by sence, and Imagination is next to sense; so that naturally all men are Idolaters before conversion in one kinde or other, and dote so upon their owne, that they will not be driven out of themselves unto God in Christ, without a great deale of grace. As men naturally love the childe of their owne body, so men love the children of

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their owne braine. What is the reason that it is so hard to convert a Papist? Because it is will-worship, a device of their owne braine, suiting their naturall will and appetite. And what makes them so furious (as all Idolaters are cruell) though they be mild of their owne nature, yet as Idolaters they are cruell? It is because it is a device of their owne braine, a brat, a childe of their owne begetting; wherefore they strive to maintaine it, because it is their owne. Let us therefore conceive this much, that it is no easie matter to free the soule from Idolatry, and all the degrees of this cursed disposition, this will make us beg earnestly the Spirit of God, by which onely we shall subdue this Idolatrous proud conceit, and lay our selves open to Christ, to be disposed of as hee pleaseth. Beg the Spirit onely, whereby we shall mortifie the cursed deeds of the flesh: for nature will never subdue nature; the Spirit of God therefore is that which can, and must free us from all dregs and tainture of this cursed disposition, which the Jewes were so scourged for, and hardly driven from.

Quest.

Answ.

Rom. 8. 3.

4. Againe, consider Gods punishments in this kinde, as we see, *Rev* 9. 20. Where the *Turke* is said to be raised up against all these Idolaters, that would not be kept from worshipping the Divell, and the Image of the beast, Yet for all this, it is said *they did not repent.* And so the Jewish Church was still punished with enemies raised up against them for their Idolatry. And

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it is to be expected that the Idolatry of these westerne Churches will at length pull downe Antichrist himselfe, which must be before the conversion of the *Iewes*. For what hinders their conversion now? The world is full of Idolaters, even Christians; and therefore there must be a confusion of Antichrists Idolatrous worship before the conversion of the *Iewes*, who will not returne whilst that scandall is in their eye. Therefore that we may helpe forward that glorious worke, let us labour as much as we can to purge the Church of this, in drawing others from Idolatry, that we may helpe to make way for those glorious times a comming: for this Scripture specially hath relation unto the calling of the *Iewes*, not to be fulfilled till then, when *Ephraim shall say, what have I now any more I do with Idols?* with that for which we have been so plagued for in former times.

5. And withall let us consider this, that the end of all false worship (when it is left) is griefe and shame, befooling and shaming of our selves for it. *Ephraim* (at length) *shall say, what have I any more to do with Idols?* to cherish pride and selfe conceit: which if ever I come to Heaven I must renounce, hating my selfe for my owne pride and folly.

6. And so for Idolaters themselves, why should we consort our selves with these, of whom we shall say one day, what have we now any more to doe with them? wee must be seperated from them here, or in Hell live with

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them for ever. What will then be the hell of hell? Mutuall cursing of one another; thy familiarity and acquaintance, thy provocations and allurements brought mee into these torments. If we be long to God, late or soone, there must be these speeches, what have I now any more to doe with such and such lying vanities?

Exhortation.

Therefore let us not thinke will-worship a slight matter; for we see Popery is nothing else but a bundle of mans devices: we see in Scripture, when the dearest friends of Christ came unto him with devices of their owne and good intentions, Christ notwithstanding saw the Divell in them. *Peter* made a great confession, *Thou art the Sonne of the living God*, and then he came, *Master spare thy selfe*: whereunto Christ replied, *Get thee behind me Satan*. God is never more provoked then when men thinke to honour him with their owne devices, stablishing a false, and neglecting his owne true worship. And there is usually little amendment of these kind of persons, because they carry with them a shew of wisedome, as *Paul* saith, and great humility: which things being so carried with a shew of some grace and wisedome (though they be desperate folly in the conclusion) men hardly will part withall. As we see of corporall Adultery, few of them are reclaimed; because it hath a bewitching alluring power: which is most true of the spirituall Adulterers, there are few of them reclaimed, untill God by some severe judgement alter and bring downe the proud imagination.

Popery What?

Mat. 16. 16.

Col. 2. 18.

Corporall and Spirituall Adulterers are hardly reclaimed.

imagination to serve him as he will be served, so as to say with *Ephraim* here, *What have I now any more to doe with Idols?*

Well that wee may abhorre Idolatry the more, consider two or three direct places: *Who required these things at your hands*, saith God, when they thinke to please him with voluntary devised things, this will strike them dumbe then, the things that God requires being so easie and so few, yet we to omit them all and to devise new things of our owne: our reward shall be, *Who required these things at your hands?* And then againe saith God, *In vaine they worship mee, teaching for my precepts the devices of men.* See then the vanity of Idolaters, who though they would doe nothing in vaine, yet doe all their will-worship in vaine. It is not onely Idolatry, but obstinate Idolatry, the Romish doctrine: *Wee would have cured Babel, but she would not be cured.* Is this a light cause of our comming out of *Babylon?* doe we leave them for trifles, when they stand guilty of abhominable Idolatry? you may see here, if so be *Ephraim* out of holy affection say, *what have I now any more to doe with Idols?* What to thinke and judge of those that would bring God and Idols together; if *Ephraim* had beene of the temper that many men now are, he might have said, tush what need we care for Idols, Crucifixes and the like? there is not such a distance betwixt them and us, why may not both Religions stand together? This new fangled nice-

Isa. 1. 12.

Mat. 15. 9.

Jer. 51. 9.

How some men slight Idolatry.

nesse is but the distempered devices of some few giddy headed men who know not what they would have. This is the wisedome of many men in our times, who reckon that there is not an essentiall irreconcileable distance betweene light and darkenesse, the service of God and that of Idols. *Wee cannot serve two masters,* saith Christ. Yes say they we may serve two masters, Anti-christ and Christ, God and Belial. O but what saith *Ephraim? what have I now any more to doe with Idols?* There can be no mixture you know where there is abhomination. That Church *Rev. 3.* which was neither hot nor cold, may parallel many now in our times, who are neither hot nor cold, Papists nor Protestantes, but politicke Atheists, who will be both or neither, whatsoever may best serve and advance their worldly ends. How doth God looke upon such? (saith he) *I will spew them out of my mouth:* God hates such most of all, *now I would thou were either hot or cold.* If this be the affection of Gods people towards Idols and Idolaters, an utter aversation, and shall we thinke to jumble and mingle contrary things together, to serve God and the Divell, Christ and Anti-Christ.

Mat. 6. 24.

That in some lesser matters we may use our owne opinions. Phil. 3. 15.

Thus we see what to thinke of the temper of these men; in lighter matters indeed wee may enjoy our owne private opinions in some things, As Saint *Paul* saith in lesser things, *If any man be otherwise minded, God shall reveale it unto him.* But when hee comes to the point of

justification

justification by Christ in Gods worship? what saith he? *If any man be otherwise minded, God shall reveale it?* No, but *if I or an Angell from Heaven teach otherwise, let him be accursed.* Now when men teach another doctrine and worship, joyning with grosse Idolaters in that worship, there we must be of *Pauls* spirit; *If I or an Angell from Heaven teach otherwise, let him be accursed.* The Holy Ghost at first appeared in the forme and shape of a Dove, which is a meeke and milde creature, that hath no tallons to hurt with. Yet notwithstanding at another time, hee appeared in *fiery tongues*, to shew that the same Spirit that in lesser things maintaineth peace and love, when it is set against any sinne, especially against that sinne of sinnes Idolatry, which brings Ggds vengeance upon Kingdomes and states, and rootes them out; there the Holy Ghost must appeare in fire, that element must be in the hearts of people against that sin: that though to persons that have their slips, and in lesser matters there must be the spirit of a dove: yet there must be in men the spirit of courage, indignation, abhomination and hatred unto the Idolatry of the times. That we may say from our hearts with *Ephraim, What have I now any more to doe with Idols?*

Gal. 1. 8.

Mat. 3. 16.

Act. 2. 3.

Therefore let us joyne with those that wee shall live for ever with in Heaven, and goe in the best courses, and we shall never need to feare separation, nor want incouragements to well doing. Thus shall we neither grieve nor be

Conclusion.

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be ashamed to say with *Ephraim, What have I now any more to doe with Idols?* At the length the Kings of the earth who adore the whore, they shall come and eate her very flesh. So it will be the end of those that reigne in other mens consciences, and in a manner will be accounted gods, that all which is gotten with wrong to God, shall be renounced with griefe, shame and detestation of the persons of those that make Idols of others, and will be made Idols in the hearts of others, thinking themselves not enough respected, unlesse they command the conscience; the end of such cannot be good, all this must end in loathing, shame and detestation. *What have I now any more to doe with Idols?* said *Ephraim*, and what have I now any more to doe with such and such prophanenesse, hypocrisie, double dealing and the like, shall such persons (thus sinnefull) say one day, with shame and horror of conscience. Wherefore let us meet God betimes, and renounce our Idols of all sorts, that God may come *to heare us, observe us: and be as a greene firre tree unto us*, &c.

Rev. 17. 16.

Whereof if God please we shall heare more the next time.

* * *

The end of the eleventh Sermon.

THE

THE TWELFTH SERMON.

Hos. 14. 8.

Ephraim shall say, what have I any more to do with Idols? I have heard him and observed him: I am like a greene fire-tree, from me is thy fruit found.

THE words (as wee heard heretofore) are a gratious answer unto the prayer which God himselfe by his Spirit had dictated to *Ephraim*: as likewise a reward of *Ephraims* Reformation. Ayded by grace, *Ephraim* shall say, *What have I now any more to doe with Idols? God will*

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will heare him and obſerve him, and be like a greene firre tree unto him. For, (ſaith God) *from me ſhall Ephraims fruit be found.* Whereby we ſee that whenſoever God doth alter the ſoule by his grace, there he alſo breeds divorce and diviſion betweene it and all Idolatry, a diſpoſition in ſome ſort like himſelfe, having thoſe Sympathies and antipathies hee hath towards ſinne and goodneſſe. Now becauſe God is a jealous God, and cannot abide Idols; therefore *Ephraim* being ſanctified by the Spirit of God, is minded as God is, *What have I any more to doe with Idols?*

1. God hath framed the ſoule that it may injoy the chiefe good, and avoid the chiefe ill eſpecially, for pettie goods and pettie ills are not ſo behoovefull: Yet notwithſtanding God will have us avoid all ill, and imbrace all good, and he hath made the ſoule into an anſwerable condition. Therefore hath he planted affections therein tending to good; as Love, and Joy and delight, eſpecially made for the imbracing of the maine good, thereby to goe out of it ſelfe, and cloſe with that maine cheefe good, in cloſing wherewith it may be happy.

2. And then to avoid the cheefe ill, ſinne and damnation, hee hath planted affections of averſation, abhorring, hatred, griefe and the like. Thus hath he framed the ſoule for theſe maine ends, without which affections, the ſoule were as *Mare mortuum*, that dead ſea. The affections are the wings and the winde of the ſoule,

ſoule, that carrie it unto all which it is carried unto: eſpecially when the winde of Gods Spirit blowes upon it, then it is carried out of it ſelfe, for of it ſelfe it cannot love or hate as it ſhould, but God muſt raiſe the affections, and lay them downe againe. Wee have not the managing of our owne hearts; grace teacheth us to doe all.

The particular then here, is indignation and hatred, *What have I now any more to doe with Idols?* So that the proper affection in Gods children, which ſhould be converſant about that which is ill, and ſinnefully ill, is hatred and indignation, here is hatred with indignation, the extent of the affection.

The reaſon whereof is, when Gods children are once converted, they have a new nature put into them, like unto Chriſt whoſe Spirit they have, what he hates they hate. He hates all ſinne, and nothing but ſinne, he hates the Divell himſelfe for ſin, and no further. *Reaſon* 1.

Then againe, when once they are Gods children, they have a new life put into them, which hath antipathie to all that is contrary to it. Every life in any creature hath antipathie to every enemy thereof. There is antipathie in Dogs to Birds of prey, and in the Lambe to the Wolfe, becauſe they are enemies to the life and being of them. So in the ſoule of a Chriſtian ſo farre as grace is renewed, there is an antipathie, averſation and abhorring of that which is contrary. What have I to doe with ſinne in any kinde? 2.

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kind? when grace hath altered the disposition of a mans heart, then sin and he are two: two indeed in the most opposite tearmes that may be, what have I any more to doe with my former delightfull sins? we are two now, for we were before nothing but sin. And indeed where this hatred is not, there men may leave sin, because sin leaves them: but this is not enough, God would have us to hate it with indignation, what have I now any more to doe with it?

Quest. But how should we come to have this true hatred of sin, as *Ephraim* should have?

Answ. 1. *Helps to hate sinne.* Amongst those helpes formerly named, this is a maine one: to represent to the soule, (as the soule is quicke and nimble in such apprehensions) the odiousnesse of sinne, that it is a truly hatefull thing; and therefore that our affection of hatred cannot be better set nor imployed upon any object then that of sinne. For let us consider that it is not onely ill in it selfe, defiling the soule, and hindering communion with God, but it is also the cause of all ills, being the ill of ills, as God is the good of goods. For our troubles and terrors of conscience, wee may thanke sinne, and for all that we suffer every day in our conditions of life; what is all but the fruite of our owne wayes? *Wherefore suffereth living man,* (saith the Prophet,) *man suffereth for his sinne. Thine owne inventions have brought these things upon thee; therefore they are bitter unto thee, they shall pierce thy bowels.* Shall wee not therefore hate that which is the cause of all

Lam. 3. 39. Ier. 4. 18.

mischiefe

miſchiefe to us? If we had an enemy, eſpecially if he were a ſoothing falſe enemy, that under pretence of love ſhould ſeeke our baine and ruine, and joyne with our worſt enemies, would we not hate ſuch an enemy? Sinne is the greateſt enemy which we have in the world, and doth us more harme then the Divell himſelfe, for it betrayes us to the Divell, and under pretence of favouring and pleaſing our nature, betrayes us. It is a falſe deceitfull enemy, which commeth not in an ugly ſhape, but cloſes with the ſoule in a kind of conjugall love, *Dalilah* like inticing and alluring us, whereby it hath the more advantage and ſtrength, in that it appeares in a lovely, pleaſing, and not in an imperious commanding manner: therefore it ſhould be the more hatefull to us. Shall we not hate ſuch an enemy as alwayes dogs us, and hinders us, hinders us from doing any thing well, and puts us on to all that is ill. It is ſuch an enemy that we cannot goe about to pray or doe any good thing, but it hangs upon us and clogs us in all our performances. If a man knew that ſuch an one as made love to him and all his, were his great grand enemy, ayming at his deſtruction, would a man ever love ſuch a man? thy baſe, falſe, revengfull, covetous, worldly heart, it joynes with Sathan, without which he could not hurt thee. Shall a man cheriſh that which betrayes him to his worſt enemy the Divell? and then ſhould he cheriſh that which makes a breach betwixt him and his beſt friend? If

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a man ſaw one ſo maliciouſly evill towards him, as to ſow diſſention by all meanes hee could betwixt him and his beſt honourable friend by whom hee was maintained in all things, would not a man hate ſuch a one? what doth ſinne elſe but breed diviſion and enmity betwixt God and us? and further, when it hath mooved us to doe ill, it cryeth for vengeance againſt us at Gods hands. Conſcience ſoundly awakened, is alwayes clamarous to pull ſomewhat from God againſt us. Are not ſinners juſtly called fooles? either men muſt be Atheiſts to deny all, or elſe if they cheriſh ſinne, they muſt needs be fooles and ſtarke mad if they confeſſe this, that they joyne with that which is their chiefe enemy. Therefore learne to be wiſe to ſalvation, make not with *Salomons* foole a ſport of ſinne, of ſwearing, of defiling our ſelves and others, ſeeing God threatneth damnation unto ſuch.

Prov. 10. 23.

And then againe, avoid all parly and intercourſe with ſinne in the firſt ſuggeſtions; or with wicked perſons that may draw us away. Uſe ſinne ruggedly and harſhly as they doe here, *what have I to doe with Idols?* doe but intertaine parly with it, and it is of ſuch an inſinuating nature, that it will incroach daily, and ſpread over the ſoule ſuddenly, betraying it to the Divell. Therefore uſe it hardly in the firſt beginnings, and avoid Satan in the firſt ſuggeſtions, if we love the peace of our ſoules, as *Ephraim* here, *what have I any more to doe*

with

with Idols? for as we ſay in the caſe of honeſty. They come too neare that come to have the refuſall. They ſhould not have ſo much hope from a chaſt perſon, there ſhould be ſuch a modeſt carriage, as ſhould not give any one the boldneſſe to adventure in that kind. So if a man carry himſelf remotely from ſinnefull courſes, he ſhall have a great deale of peace from wicked men, who dare not ſo much as adventure to draw away ſuch a one, they know he is reſolved. Therfore conſtant reſolution againſt all ſinne and wicked men will breed a great deale of peace, ſo as to ſay with *Ephraim, what have I any more to doe with Idols?*

Hatred of ſinne whence?

And we muſt know, that this hatred comes from the life of God in us, therefore we muſt by all meanes maintaine ſpirituall life, and then as we grow ſpirituall, we ſhall grow in the deteſtation of ſin, a ſenſe of joy in good things, with a hatred of all that is contrary. A man can never hate ſinne till he hath the Spirit of Chriſt in him, for there be 3. Quæres, whereof this is the laſt. 3.

Quæres.

The firſt is ſet downe *Ieremy. 8. 6. No man ſaid what have I done?* When conſcience in a man is awakened once, he ſaith, O! what have I done? what caſe am I in? 1.

The ſecond Quære of a wakened conſcience is, *what ſhall I doe?* as that *Act. 2. Men and Bretheren, what ſhall we doe to be ſaved?* he that truely ſaith, *what have I done?* if conſcience be awakened, will alſo ſay, *what ſhall I doe?* you ſhall not need to drive him, when the Queſtion is anſwered, *what ſhall I doe to be ſaved?* that is by 2.

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caſting my ſelfe upon God in Chriſt. We need not put the queſtion, he will ſay of himſelfe, what have I any more to doe with that which is contrary to that which ſaves me? *What have I to doe with Idols?* this comes in in the laſt place. 1. A man is awakened out of his naturall condition. 2. Then he goes to God in Chriſt. And then 3. There is a ſpirituall life wrought in him, which ſtirs him up to hate all that is contrary unto it: *What have I now any more to doe with Idols?*

3.

For I have heard him and obſerved him.

I have ſeene and obſerved him, ſome reade the words, but very few, which is thus a very good and pious conſtruction of them: *what have I now any more to doe with Idols?* As if *Ephraim* ſhould ſay theſe words, *I have ſeene him and obſerved him,* that is, becauſe I have ſeene him and obſerved, therefore *what have I now any more to doe with Idols?* As ſoone as a man comes to heare God ſpeake, and to obſerve God, downe goes all Idols, for indeed the reſpect to Idolatry, and any thing that is naught, it fals down in the ſoule, as the knowledge of the true God is lifted up, and as affection to good things are raiſed up in the ſoule. *What have I to doe with Idols any more; I have ſeene and obſerved him* · as *Iob* ſaid of himſelfe when he had ſeene God: *I abhorre my ſelfe and repent in duſt and aſhes.* Much more all falſe courſes. I abhorre them all, now that *I have ſeene and obſerved him.*

Job. 42. 2.

This is a ſafe, pious, and good ſenſe, but the words under correction are fitlieſt applied unto God

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God himſelfe, as if God rather then *Ephraim* ſaid thus, *I will heare him and obſerve him*, I will do thus and thus, *I will be as a greene firre-tree to ſhade him* from danger, and to make him fruitfull. But you will ſay *Ephraim* cannot caſt away Idols till God reſpect him firſt. Therfore this is promiſed in the ſecond place, *Ephraim* ſhall ſay, *what have I to doe with Idols?* And God ſhall ſay, I have ſeene him, heard him, and obſerved him, when he hath caſt away Idols. *Object.*

To this the Anſwer is, indeed in the order of nature God doth firſt ſtirre us up to pray to him, and promiſeth us reſpect and hearing of our prayers, after which we caſt away Idols, but the experience of it is after we have done the deed. After that we have found God experimentally gratious, protecting and hearing of us, then we caſt away Idols. So this experience a Chriſtian finds, when he abhominates and rejects ill waies, then he finds God allſufficient, as indeed God is never fully felt and knowne till we renounce all other helps. So the generall point is, *Anſw.*

That nothing is loſt by renouncing Idolatry, and carnall confidence in any worldly thing. *Obſerv.*

For God makes a ſupply in himſelfe, *I will heare him and obſerve him.* Nothing is loſt, for God will be true of his promiſe, *Seeke ye firſt the kingdome of God and his Righteouſnes, and all other things ſhall be miniſtred unto you.* Mat. 6. 33. The Truth of God and then his Mercy makes this good. Is not God mercifull to his children when they renounce all falſe confidence? In re-

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gard of the truth of his promiſe and mercy, he will make good this, that nothing is loſt by cleaving to him. We read in the ſtory of our owne times, in King *Edward* the ſixts raigne, the ſame day that there was reformation of Idolatry in *London*, purging of Churches from roodes and Idols. The ſame day was that noble victorie and conqueſt in the North parts over the enemies. So God anſwered their care, in reforming things amiſſe with good ſucceſſe.

On the contrary, when we goe on with favouring abuſes and corruptions, yet expecting good ſucceſſe, it is in vaine. Let *Ephraim* come to ſay, *what have I to doe with Idols?* and ſee then whether God will reſpect him or not. Doe Nations or perſons thinke that God will reſpect them or bleſſe them, whilſt they do that which is abhominable to him. No; when *Ephraim* ſaith, *what have I to doe with Idols?* then preſently comes, God will *heare* and *obſerve* him, and looke to him, as you have it in that gratious promiſe, *The eyes of the Lord are open unto all them that feare him, and his eares are open to their prayers*, his *eyes* and his *eares*. Indeed God is all eye and all eare, the beſt friend in the world, cannot have his eye alwayes upon us, the mothers eye cannot be alwayes upon her child, ſhe muſt have a time to ſleepe, when neither her eyes nor eares are open to her childs prayers, it may cry and die in crying ſometimes before ſhee can helpe it. But if wee renounce ſinne, we have a gratious Father, *who will heare us, obſerve us, and ſee us,*

Pſal. 34. 15.

and

and not onely heare and ſee, but as the Scripture phraſe is, doe that that followes all this, where he ſees, he will pitty and relieve, and where he heares, he will pitty and protect.

I have heard him, I have obſerved him.

God will heare when once we renounce ſin. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not heare my prayers,* ſaith *David.* But when I doe not regard iniquity God will heare my prayers. Then a man may know that God will heare him, when once he hath renounced ſinne and comes with cleane hands and heart to God. As it is in *Iſaias*, they were corrupted in their courſe, and yet came to God, but hee rejects all, ſo in the laſt of that Prophecie, he accounts of their Sacrifices, as of the cutting off of a dogs necke, becauſe their hands were full of blood, and they were full of ſinne. Reforme abuſes, let there bee perſonall and nationall Reformation, and then come and reaſon the matter with God, and ſee whether he will regard us or not. The Spirit it is ſaid, makes requeſts for the Saints, and *God knoweth the meaning of the Spirit, becauſe it makes requeſt according to the will of God.* The ſame Spirit that ſtirrs us up to amend our lives and fly Idolatrous courſes, the ſame Spirit ſtirs us up to pray to God according to the will of God, and then God heares the deſires of his owne Spirit. Of all judgements in the world this is the greateſt to pray and not to be heard, for when wee are in miſery, our remedy is prayer: now when

Pſal. 66. 18.

Iſa. 1.

Rom. 8. 27.

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that which ſhould be our remedy is not regarded, what a pittifull thing is that? Now here is an excellent bleſſing ſet downe to pray, and for God to heare, *I will heare him and obſerve him.* Becauſe then God and *Ephraim* were of one minde and joyne in one, therfore God cannot but heare and regard *Ephraim*, being of his minde to love and to hate what he loves and hates. As ſoone as ever the *Prodigall* began to hate his former courſes, the Father came out to meete him, and ſo of *David*, *I ſaid I will confeſſe my ſins to God*, (*I ſaid*) that is, in my heart I reſolved to confeſſe to God, *and thou forgaveſt mine iniquity*, God heard his reſolution. We cannot elſe entertaine a full purpoſe to goe to God, unleſſe there be a ceſſation from ſinne: the *Prodigall* for all his contrition, was afraid to be ſhaken off his Father for his diſſolute life: O! but the Father provides a banquet: ſo it is when we turne to God and reſolve a new life, to caſt away our Idolatries, and former abhominations, preſently *God heares us and obſerves us*, and is ready to meet us.

Luk. 16.

Pſal. 32. 3.

There is an excellent place even touching *Ephraim* himſelfe, *I have ſurely heard Ephraim bemoaning himſelfe, thou haſt chaſtiſed mee, and I was chaſtiſed as a Bullock unaccuſtomed to the yoake, turne mee to thee and I ſhall bee turned, thou art the Lord my God*, &c. *Is Ephraim a deare ſonne, is hee a pleaſant child, for ſince I ſpake againſt him I doe earneſtly remember him ſtill; therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will have mercy upon him.* If *Ephraim* beginne to bemoane

Ier. 31. 18.

moane himſelfe for his folly, preſently followes, that Gods bowels are turned to him, ſo it is ſaid of *Ephraim* here, after he had renounced Idols, Gods bowels are turned towards him, *I have heard him and obſerved him.* Which yeelds us a ſweet and comfortable conſideration, to turne to God from all our ſinfull courſes, becauſe God is ſo ready to forgive, and to forgive great ſinnes. What if our ſinne be Idolatry, the grand ſinne of the firſt Table: yet if *Ephraim* ſay, *What have I to doe with Idols?* (though it be ſpirituall adultery) yet if *Ephraim* begin to renounce Idolatry, God will ſay, *I have heard him and obſerved him.* If your ſinnes *were as red as crimſon* (ſaith God) *I will make them white as wooll*, &c. Crimſon ſins, double dyed ſinnes, it is no matter what they are, if we come to God, there is more mercy in him then ſinne in us. If *Ephraim* ſay, what have I to doe with my former evill courſes, *God will heare him and obſerve him.* Iſa. 1. 18.

It is never better with a Chriſtian, then when he hath renounced all wicked courſes, though he thinkes himſelfe undone if he leave his former *Dalilah* delights, but there is no ſuch matter, for we ſhall finde an hundred fold more in God, as Chriſt ſpeakes, *Whoſoever leaves father or mother, brother or ſiſter, houſe or kindred for me, ſhall have a hundred fold in this world*, that is, they ſhall have it in contentment and grace, in peace of conſcience, and perhaps in the things of this life in another kinde. What loſt *Abraham*, when he obeyed God, and forſooke his Mat. 19. 29.

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fathers house? God was all-sufficient for him, he grew a rich man. And what lost he by giving *Isaacke* to God? he received his sonne againe, of whom there came an innumerable seed. And what lost holy *David* in waiting for the time that he should come unto the Kingdome without making haste, he came quietly to the possession of the crowne: whereas *Ieroboam* who made more haste, after God had told him he should raigne, he was cursed in his government, and none of his posterity came to good. There is nothing lost by depending and waiting upon God, and renouncing of carnall confidence. We think naturally we are undone, O! there is no such matter, as *David* speakes, *When my father and mother forsaketh me, yet the Lord taketh me up.* As we know in the Gospell, when the blind poore man was excommunicated and cast out, after he had spoke somewhat stoutely to the *Pharisees, will yee also be his Disciples?* yet then Christ takes him presently into his company, being expelled by them, what lost he by this? So when Israell had lost all their flesh-pots in *Ægypt*, they had no losse, for God provided them Manna from Heaven, and what lost they by that? they had Angels food instead of their garlicke and onyons.

Psal. 27. 10.

Ioh. 9.

I have observed him.

That is, I will have a speciall eye to him, I will looke to him in all conditions and states whatsoever: God never slumbers nor sleepes, like the Master of the house in the Parable, who when the poore man came for bread, all the

Luk. 11. 5.

rest

rest being asleepe is awaked, and raised up by the importunity of the poore man. So the great Master of the family of Heaven and Earth that governes all, he wakes day and night and never sleepes; herein going beyond the care of the deerest friends we have in the world, for they must have a time to sleepe, the mother though she love the childe as her owne bowels, yet notwithstanding she must have a resting time, and perhaps in that time the childe may miscarry: but God alwayes observes, his eye is alwayes upon his children, they are before him, written in the palmes of his hands; he hath them in his eye: as in *Exodus*, you have there God brought in observing the children of *Israel*: *I have seene, I have seene the affliction of my people Israel*; they thought themselves neglected of God, but he tells *Moses*, *I have seene, I have seene*, I know it very well, he adds knowledge to sight. So there is no affliction in this world to Gods children, but God in seeing sees, as before he heares the groanes and sighs, so he sees the most intimate inward affliction whatsoever that afflicts the soule, as they were grieved in very soule at the tyranny of *Pharoah*. Oh but God in seeing hee sees, whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter then the Sunne. This is a consolation, when one thinkes that no man sees and regards: alas, what shall become of me? Why should any man say so that hath God to go too, who is all eye, and all eare. God heares and sees, his eares are alwayes open, as it is often shewed, especially, *Psal.* 34. 15.

Isa. 49. 16.

Exod. 3. 7.

It

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It is said, *His eares are open to their prayers, and his eyes to see their afflictions.*

Quest. But with what kinde of eye doth God see the afflictions of his children?

Sol. Hee sees them with a tender compassionate eye, for he aboundeth in those affections which he hath put into a Father and Mother: there is no Mother would suffer her childe to miscarry if shee could helpe it, God sees surely some afflictions are for our good, or he would releeve us, for as he hath a compassionate eye, so he hath a tender heart, and a powerfull hand. He sees wicked men also, but his eyes in regard of them are like a flame of fier, not onely because he is quickesighted, but because he sees with a revengfull eye, and as his eyes are like a flame of fire, so likewise he hath feete of brasse to tread them to pouder.

Rev. 1. 14. 15.

Vse. 1. And this likewise is no little part of our comfort, for when we suffer any thing in this world, it is from ill men for the most part, except it be in those afflictions wherein we more immediately deale with God, as in sickneese, &c. But in persecution in the world, our trouble lies with men: therefore it is our comfort, God sees our trouble and their malice, and as he is ready to helpe the one, so he is to revenge the other.

Vse 2. And as it is a point of comfort, so of great incouragement to be bold in Gods cause, what shall we be baser then the base creatures? take but a dog in his masters sight, you see how he will fight. Take the meanest and baseest crea-

ture,

ture, when it hath a superiour nature to it selfe, that is wiser and greater, that incourageth and sets it on, that it knowes will see it take no harme, these base creatures will be couragious, which otherwise if it had none to set it on, had no courage at all, at least not so much. And shall we in the sight of God, and when we are set in his quarrell, and have his incouragement and his command, with promise of his presence and assistance flinch and flie of then? It argues a great deale of atheisme and infidelity of heart. God sees me and lookes on me while I fight, and while I stand for his cause: Gods cause is true and just, God sees me, and he sees who oppoſeth me. In regard of the eye of God therefore, let us be couragious in these things that are agreeable to the mind of God, whatsoever they be, whether matters of justice or piety.

Againe if God have such an eare to heare us, let us have an eare to heare him, and an eye to looke to him; let us have *Moses* eye, to looke on him who is invisible, his eye is upon us, and let our eye be to him, both may be together. When these two eyes meet, when my heart tells me that God seeth me, and that I see God looking upon me, this makes couragious. Therefore as God heares and sees us, so we must have an eye to see him that is invisible. And so we passe from these words: *I have heard him and observed him*, and what the Prophets meaning is; *I have heard him and will heare him: I have observed him and will observe him:*

Vse. 3.

For

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For they containe a perpetuall action in God, not that he hath, and will not doe it now: but what he hath done and will doe, that he ſets downe here in borrowed ſpeeches, for he ſaith alſo,

I will be like a greene firre-tree to him, from me is thy fruit found.

God will be *like a greene firre-tree* in regard of ſhadow. a *Firre-tree* is a high tree, a goodly ſmooth tree, barren in regard of fruit, but it hath thicke leaves, which hinders raine from falling upon thoſe who reſt under the ſhadow thereof, and likewiſe keepes the Sunne from annoying them, ſo it is a fit tree for ſhadow, and the fitter becauſe it hath no fruit, for uſually thoſe trees which ſpend not themſelves this way, they ſpend themſelves in leaves, and have a perpetuall greeneneſſe, which is ſupplied with that which ſhould be fruit in fruitfull trees. Therfore he ſets it down by this compariſon of a *firre-tree*, that ſo God will keepe backe all ſhowers, tempeſts and ſtormes, and all annoying heate, and he will doe it perpetually, as the firre-tree hath a perpetuall greeneneſſe, and he will doe it with pleaſure and delight, as it is a delightfull ſhadow. But becauſe the *Firre-tree* hath no fruit on it, God will not onely be a ſhadow to his children to keepe ill from them, but he will be a fruitfull tree to them. *From mee* (ſaith God) *ſhall thy fruit be found*, that is, whatſoever good thou doeſt, thou ſhalt have it from me, all fruitfull comfort comes from mee, and all grace; whatſoever is good for thee for proſperity of

ſoule

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ſoule or body, all is from me. So we ſee how God conveyeth himſelfe and his mercy here by ſweet compariſons, dealing very familiarly with us, and ſpeaking to us in our own language, we will take both in order as they lye.

God will be as a *firre tree* in regard of ſhadow to the paſſenger, and keeping off of ſtormes, the great God, and the good God who is goodneſſe it ſelfe, hath provided in this world, not onely good for us, but hath alſo promiſed defences againſt all annoyances. In the compariſon it ſelfe we will obſerve ſomewhat concerning the goodneſſe of God, for as in this life we are ſubject to many inconveniences, wants and neceſſities, ſo God hath ſupply for all, even outward neceſſities; wee are ſubject to cold, for that we have the element of fire: wee are ſubject to ſtormes, he hath provided garments and skill to make them: ſo in our travells he hath provided ſome trees eſpecially to ſhelter us. Wee cannot name any inconvenience of this life, but the rich God in his goodneſſe hath provided a ſuitable ſupply. Doth God take care for this fading periſhing life, which is but as a vapor, and hath he good things for it, and fences from the ill and annoyances of it, till we have fulfilled our pilgrimage upon earth? and will not that God have a care of our beſt life of grace that ſhall end in glory, that we ſhall have all things neceſſary for life and godlineſſe, which hath the promiſe not of this life onely, but of a better: he that is ſo good to this na- 2 Pet. 1. 3.

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turall life, will be much more in things concerning a better life, which he would have us mind more, *I will be as a greene firre-tree unto him.*

God will be as a *firre-tree* eſpecially in regard of ſhadow, to keepe from all annoyance both of ſtorme and of the Sunne, for the Sunne in thoſe hot countries annoyes them very much, as the Spouſe complaines of her blackneſſe, *becauſe the Sunne had ſhined upon her*, to be *blacke as the tents of Kedar*, &c. Whence we may obſerve by the way.

Cant. 1. 5.

Obſerv. *There is not the moſt comfortable refreſhing creature in the world, but take it in the exceſſe, it harmes and annoyes.*

What more comfortable then water, yet if it prevaile and abound, it is a deſtroying creature, as we ſee in the deluge and divers inundations? what more comfortable then fire? and what more terrible if it exceed? what more cheriſhing, refreſhing and quickning then the Sunne, yet in the exceſſive heate thereof it ſcorcheth and parcheth things. So in the Sunne of proſperity and all other good things in the world, it is beſt to have and enjoy all things with moderation: for if we have grace to qualifie them, all things are good? otherwiſe the exceſſe hurts us. Therefore beg of God wiſdome to temper and moderate the beſt good in this world, which otherwiſe hurts us. For even the exceſſive heate of the Sunne in thoſe countries, makes them glad of the ſhadow of the *firre-tree.*

Thus God doth not onely give a ſhadow, but

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but a comfortable ſhadow and defence to his people, which is therfore called *the ſhadow of his wings How oft* (ſaith Chriſt to *Hieruſalem*) *would I have gathered thee as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings.* Mat. 23. 37. It is not onely a ſhielding from hurts and dangers, and ſtormes, but a ſweet defence with reſt and quiet: as thoſe that are weary compoſe themſelves to reſt under a ſhadow, ſo in God is our reſt: *Come unto me* (ſaith Chriſt) *all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and ye ſhall find reſt to your ſoules.* Mat. 11. 28. All reſt is in Chriſt and in Gods mercy in Chriſt. We ſee then after we have forſooke Idolatry God is to us inſtead of all the good we had by Idols, we looſe nothing by it, *God will be as a greene fir tree:* whence the point is,

Obſerv. *There is a protection, reſt, and defence provided for Gods people, when once they have renounced their Idolatry and ſinnefull courſes.*

Thoſe who refuſe the ſhelter of Idols, God will be a ſhelter unto them, *a greene firre-tree unto them,* another manner of ſhelter, then that which Idols or any other creature can give them. Every man will have ſome ſhelter, ſhield, or other to cover him, this or that great man to ſhield or ſhelter himſelfe under. A rich man he hath riches, another this or that defence, every man that hath any wit about him, will have ſome ſhelter, and not lye open to all ſtormes when they come. But the onely true ſhelter is God himſelfe to a Chriſtian: all other refuges are but ſhadowes, that is they are nothing but like *Ionas* gourd, which may ſhelter for

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for a time, but there is a worme of vanity that will eate them out. Riches and the favour of men may ſhelter for a time, but there is a worme at the bottome which will roote them out, death will conſume them, and thoſe they depend upon: but God is a true ſhelter to his people, an everlaſting habitation, as it is written: *Thou art our habitation from generation to generation*; we dwell in him as in our *Rocke* and *Caſtle*, he is an everlaſting habitation, not only a ſhadow, but a tower and a caſtle to dwell in. Therefore the only wiſe man is the Chriſtian: For as *Noah* when the flood came upon the old world and ſwept them away, had an Arke to ſave himſelfe in, ſo have all Gods children a houſe to get over their heads in the worſt times, which is Gods bleſſed protection, in whom they are ſafe. Let us thinke often of theſe things, what a bleſſed thing it is to be in the ſtate of a Chriſtian, that hath alway a certaine and ſure protection, quiet and reſt in God. And what a fearefull thing is it to be as the *Achitophels* of this world, to be as *Caine*, *Iudas* or *Saul*? who are ſhrewed in counſell and pollicy, and yet when conſcience is awakened by the ſtorme of Gods wrath, want a ſhelter, whilſt he who is above conſcience, and ſhould be a ſhelter to them frownes upon them: what a pittifull ſtate is this? the wickedeſt man in the world, though he have never ſo great dependance, parts and ſtrength from humane helps, yet when the ſtorme of Gods wrath comes, he is as a naked man in the midſt of a ſtorme,

Pſal. 90. 1.

stormes, and knows not whether to go: therfore let us be wise to have God for our shelter, if we would not be like these miserable politicians and worldlings.

Now from this that the shadow is comfortable in those hot countries, where the Sun is directly over their heads, comes these sweet phrases in the *Psalmes*, and other Scriptures. *Thou shalt keepe me under the shadow of thy wings: as the apple tree among st the trees of the forrest, so is my beloved among st the sons: I sate downe under his shadow with great delight*, &c. The Church speaks of Christ, *I sate under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste*. The like you have in many places in the *Psalmes*, I will name one or two more pregnant then the rest, to helpe our memories, and to breed a deeper impression of so comfortable a point, *Psal.* 63. There the *Psalmist* speakes of resting under the shadow of Gods wings. And so in that other sweet and excellent *Psalme*, in the greatest extreamities of Gods people, *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High*, that is God, *shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty*. He sayes after, *I will say of the Lord he is my refuge and fortresse*, for where God tels a man that he is a hiding place and a shadow, there Faith adds the application presently, and then he goes on speaking of himselfe, *He shall cover me with his feathers, under his wings will I rest, his truth shall be my buckler, thou shalt not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow by day, nor of the pestilence that walketh in the darke, a thousand*

Cant. 2. 3.

Psal. 91. 1.

shall fall, &c. So that we see how God doth that to our soules and conditions, that the fire tree which is Gods good creature, doth to the body in the time of storme and heat; that is he doth refresh us under the shadow of his wings, he is a sweet, comfortable and gratious God unto us. This you see is a cleere truth, yet because it is so comfortable we will inlarge it further: looke what God speaks, *Isa* 4.45. *The Lord will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assembly a cloud and smoake by day, and the shining of a flame of fire by night for upon all the glory shall be a defence.* See what a comfortable shadow God is, he saith, *he will create*, if they want the comfort of the *fire-tree* and such like shadowes, he sayes *God will create*, that is make them of nothing, he will *create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion*, where his children dwell, and upon their assemblies, *a cloud and a smoake by day*, that is, when they are annoyed by the Sun, God will create a cloud to keepe the rage and the scorching heat of the Sun from them, and then a *shining flame of fire by night*, because in the night we need light, for *upon all the glory shall be a defence*, that is upon all the glorious Saints of God, they are *Glory*, for there is a Spirit of glory put into them. The people of God in whom God will glorifie himself, are glorious, and shall bee further glorified, and they shall in the meantime, have a defence by day and by night from all dangers whatsoever.

1 Pet. 4. 14.

Thus it is cleare that God will be a *shadow* to his

his people, as the *fir-tree*: which is an allusion to that grand passage of his providence in conducting the children of *Israel* out of *Ægypt* where (God to guide them) provided a *cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night*, the same *pillar* which was lightsome to the *Israelites* was darke to the *Ægyptians*, which cloud and pillar of fire continued, (God conducting them) till they came into the land of *Canaan*. He shadowed them by day with a cloud and lightned and heated them by a pillar of fire at night, thus conducting them till they came to *Canaan*. So we passing through the wildernesse of this world till wee come unto our celestiall *Canaan* Heaven. God will be a *cloude* by his gratious speciall providence, to keepe all ill whatsoever from us, and a *pillar of fire* to lighten and direct us till we come to our heavenly *Canaan*, where he will be all in all, when we shall need neither Sunne nor Moon, nor have any thing to annoy us. There the noon-day shall not burne us with heat of the Sunne, nor the fire by night, when we are in Heaven, there shall be no annoyance of the creature: there shall be no more want of light, because we shall have all light and refreshing there forever and ever. For as it is written, then *all teares*, all sorrow and cause of sorrow shall be for ever wiped away, an allusion wherunto we have comfortably set downe, *Psal.* 121. The more we shall enrich and refresh our memories with thinking of these things, the more comfort will sink into our hearts. The 121. *Psal.* is all spent on com-

Exo. 14. 20.

Rev. 7. 16.

Psal. 121.

sort in this kind. *I will lift up mine eyes to the hils whence commeth my salvation: my helpe commeth from the Lord who made Heaven and Earth*, all my helpe is from him, *he will not suffer my foot to be moved, he that keepes Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. He will not slumber*, that is, his eyes are alwaies open to see, as his *eares* to heare. *Behold hee that keepeth Israel doth neither slumber nor sleepe, the Lord is my keeper, thy shadow, so that the Sunne shall not smite thee by day, nor the moone by night, the Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy comming in, from this time for ever.* Thus we see this Scripture is a large glosse and commentary upon this truth, that God with a speciall providence and protection cares for his children to keepe them from all ill: he will be as the *fir-tree to them* in regard of shadow; Whence we observe in speciall,

Observe. *That this life of ours whilst we come to Heaven is subject to scorchings and many annoyances, and those both outwardly and inwardly, from our selves and from others.*

First, for *outward annoyances*, how many of them is our poore life subject unto? and for inward terror and boyling heate of conscience, when God in anger discovers himselfe unto us, and sets our sins in order before us? O then, if we have not a shadow, if God in mercy through Jesus Christ be not a shadow to keepe that boyling heat from us, what will become of the poore conscience? especially if Satan adds his poisoned fiery darts, poysoning, inflaming the conscience with temptations to despaire, as if God had for-

Psa. 50.22.

saken

ſaken and were angry, or when God ſeemes angry, then he ſeems like a conſuming fire. O! who can abide it, when all theſe fiery temptations are joyned with Gods anger? yet the dearest of Gods Saints are ſubject to theſe inward boyling hearts of Gods anger. *My God my God why haſt thou forſaken me*, ſaid the head of the Church himſelfe, and ſee how *Iob* complaines, *thou haſt ſet me as a But to ſhoot at*. And in regard of this ſpirituall deſertion *David* complains much throughout the *Pſalmes*. So this our life is ſubject to outward and ſpirituall annoyances, from God, from Satan, and from our ſelves and the world, every way annoyed with ſcorchings & heat, what need a ſhadow, a protection, a defence elſe. That ſuppoſeth this.

Mat. 27. 46.

Iob 16. 12.

If this be ſo, then conſider how fearefull the condition of thoſe people is that are not under the ſhadow of the Almighty, who have not God as a *fir. tree* to ſhadow and cover them, that he is not a cloud by day too, and a pillar of fire by night, that have not him for a hiding place to ſpread the wings of his mercy over them. What is the ſtate of ſuch people? ſurely howſoever God feed them, and fils their belly with good things in this world for a time, yet their caſe will be fearefull, when God lets looſe conſcience and Satans fiery darts againſt them. Judge then hereby what our ſtate is by nature without God. The ſame ſunne which cheriſheth and comforteth, alſo tortures and ſcorcheth us: ſo God is a ſunne, a quickning ſunne to his children, yea a vigorous ſunne, who hath healing under his wings; but

Their miſery who have not God for a ſhadow is ſhewed.

Mal. 4. 2. Heb. 12. 29.

to the wicked he is a scorching and a consuming fire, it is a fearfull thing to fall into the hands of the living God who is so dreadfull, he will not be a shadow to the wicked in an excellent manner, he indeed permits them to have many shadows in this world, many sweet comforts, and keeps them also from many dangers, but they have not that worthy portion which *Hannah* had from her husband, Love at the house of death, and in time of temptation, when these comforts leave them, what shadow have they then? none at all; but are as naked men in a storme, subject to the fury of Gods eternall wrath. The things which are most comfortable to Gods people are most terrible to them, as it is said in one of those plagues powred out upon *Antichrist* (for all the viols there spoken of tend to the punishing of *Antichrist*,) there is a viol powred forth upon the Sunne, which reflecting and lighting upon them, causeth them to blaspheme, they were so scorched with it. The *Sun* by probable interpreters, is said to be the word of God, which when it is opened is sweet and comfortable to Gods people, but shining upon men that are naught, especially at the houre of death, in affliction and in distresse it speakes no comfort to them, but causeth them to despaire, rage and storme. Nay, prophane men when they are at the best, they rage and storme at the direction of the sun, because it discovers to them that which they would not have known.

Revel. 6.

Vse 1. Now what Vse should we make of this? will God

God be a shadow to his people to keepe them from all evill, as his promise was to *Abraham* in the covenant of grace: *I will be thy buckler* to keep ill from thee, and *thy exceeding great reward*. And in the *Psalmes*, God promiseth to be a *Sunne* for good, and a *shield* to keep of all ill. Will God bestow good & keep off ill from us? then labour to come willingly under the shadow of the *Almighty* to serve him, and to make God in covenant our God, that he may be a *shield and abiding place* unto us, and a *shadow* in all extremities whatsoever. Those that attend upon great persons, they do it upon this hope: O if I belong to such a great person, he will shelter me, that every base person shall not wrong me; I shall now have some prerogatives. Doth carnall policy teach poore creatures who are subject to abuse it, to get some shelter of great noble men to be priviledged, and shall not spirituall wisdome teach us to get under the great God, under the shadow of his wings? none can come neere to annoy us without his speciall will and leave, as in the story of *Iob*, The Divel durst not annoy him, nor enter into the Swine, much lesse hurt Gods children, shall we not therfore get under the service of our God, can any man shelter us better? there is no service to that of a King, but is there any service to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords? will he suffer his children to be abused in his own sight, or his followers disgraced? surely no, therfore make this use of it, to get into the service of the great God, which is a rich, secure, and safe service.

Gen. 15. 1. Psal. 84. 11.

Iob 1. Mat. 8. 31.

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Vſe 2.

Again, it yeelds us an uſe of Reſolution, for to obey God, and ſo go boldly on in a good courſe, vvhat ſhould we feare when God is our maſter? he will ſhield us and keepe us ſafe, and give his Angels charge over us, to ſhew that he hath a care over us, indeed he hath many keepers under him, but he is the grand keeper, who ſets all a worke: for Angels, Magiſtrates, Miniſters and our friends keepe us: but Gods Spirit vvithin us, and his gratious good providence without us are our chiefe keepers. Therfore let all our care be to ſerve God, and to be in his vvayes, he will keep us in his wayes, what an incouragement is this to be in good courſes, where we may looke for the ſhadow of the Almighty God without tempting of him. If a man be in an ill way and courſe, he cannot look that the Almighty ſhould ſhadow him: his heart will tell him, now God may withdraw his ſhelter and vving from me, he may leave me naked to the Divell and to the malice of men, he may ſtrip me of all comfort in my ſoule and conſcience, and give me up to terrours of heart out of his way. If I truſt him now I tempt him, becauſe he vvill be a defence onely in his owne vvayes. Therefore let us labour alwayes to bee in thoſe wayes; and then God will bee as a *greene firre tree* unto us.

Vſe 3.

And laſt of all, let it be an uſe of Comfort unto us, for all the time of our life to come: whatſoever may come, vve yet paſſe under a buckler, let a whole ſhowre and ſhot of arrows

fall

fall upon us, we have a buckler; *thou Lord art my Buckler, thou Lord art my defence, my hiding place, my castle*: we are subject to a world of dangers whilst we live here. But we have God instead of all, to keepe of all, he is a buckler, a shield, a shadow and a hiding place, let what ill soever bee presented to our thoughts, there is in God some Fence against it. For this purpose we have many excellent passages in *Psal.* 18. which was made after a great deliverance. *I love thee Lord my buckler, my shield, my defence*, as if he should say, I have in my life time bin annoyed with many troubles, but I have found experience of God in all. *He is my buckler, my shield, my fence*, every thing to me. So let us comfort our selves in this, let come what will come, all shall come well to Gods children, he will keepe them, if not outwardly, yet in that they most desire to be kept in, he will *preserve their spirits from every evill motion*, from doing ill, and from desperate falling from God, and he will guard them inwardly *by the peace of God which passeth understanding*, it shall guard their hearts, they shall have inward peace in the midst of all the troubles of this world: a great comfort. What a rejoycing is it to a poore passenger, when he passeth by the high way side in a hot burning day, or in a storme, to see a goodly high tree with spreading boughes, that he may hide and repose himselfe under it from the storme or heate, this pleaseth him marvellously, as *Jonas* gourd did him. Doe these outward poore contentments so refresh

Psal. 18. 1.

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us in this world, and shall we not think that God which provides such poore contentments for this sorry life in this world, will he not provide a shadow in regard of the maine dangers, surely he will if we trust him, and shew our trust by casting our selves upon him in obedience suitable to our calling (saith the Apostle) *I am perswaded that neither things present, nor to come, nor life nor death, nor any thing shall be able to seperate us from the love of Christ Jesus our Lord.* Therefore let us be afraid of nothing that can befall us, God will be a shield and a buckler, and all in all to us in a good way. We have abundance of comfort every where in Scripture, and want nothing but Faith to apply it home in practise. Therefore we ought to beg of God so to inlarge our Faith, that as his promises and comforts are very large, so may our vessels be to retaine all these excellent comforts and sweet promises.

Rom. 8. 38, 39.

All other comforts in the world, are but like *Ionas* gourd, for all other shadowes yeeld onely a shadow for a while, and then the Sun-shine or East-winde is like a worme to nip them a sunder. Never trust then, or leane to such shadowes as these be, of Friends, Riches, &c. Which are shadowes men ordinarily relie upon. I have such and such a friend, a place, and the like, my mountaine is thus and thus strong: all these are *Ionas gourds*, there is a worme of vanity will be at the roote of all and consume all, all other shadowes are but meere shadowes. What is more transient then a shadow,

dow, but Gods shadow is like a *greene firre-tree*, it never failes nor forsakes us, as all other shadowes and contentments doe whatsoever: but God saith, *He will be like a greene firre-tree unto thee*, yet this is not all, not enough, for after this he adds,

From me is thy fruit found.

God is not only to his children a *firre-tree* in regard of shadow, that tree abounding in leaves very thicke, whereby we are kept from annoyance of scorching heats of troubles and terrors of conscience and persecution, &c. This is not all, but he saith also,

From me is thy fruit found.

A *Firre tree* though it be for thicknesse of the leaves a very good shade, yet it is a barren fruitles tree, but God is such a tree as hath both shadow and fruit, in God there is a supply of al wants whatsoever. All the scattered excellencies of all creatures being united in God, and eminent in him, it is in him, and in him in a divine gratious, eminent and comfortable manner. All the creatures as they come from God, are his creatures, neither is there any creature, but hath somewhat of God in it. Therfore God vouchsafes to take names from the creatures, to be a rock of salvation, he is as a rock to build on, to be a shadowing tree, because he is a defence from ill, and to be a fruitfull tree, because he yeelds good and comfort, and grace as he doth fruit. When we see any thing that is usefull, we may say this we have from God in an eminent manner, this preser-

vation

vation and comfort. Doe I in my passage to Heaven find such comfort in the creature? when I am passing through a wild place, have I such comfort in the shadow of a tree? or when I am hungry am I so refreshed by a fruitfull tree? what comfort then is there in God, in Heaven, in glory, when there are such comforts in the way of my pilgrimage in this world, therefore God is said here, both to be a *fir-tree* and a fruitfull tree. For then the passenger travelling through a wild barren place thinks himself made, when he can retire from the scorching of the heat, and also therwithall finde fruitfulnes, shade and fruit concurring he thinks himself marvellously happy. This is the state of a Christian that hath God for his God, being in covenant with him, he is not only a strong protection and defence from all annoyance (as God shadowes us and is a buckler from all evils both inward and outward, from Sathan and all kinde of evils and wrath) but hee is also a fruitfull tree too,

From mee is thy fruit found.

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The end of the twelfth Sermon.

THE

THE THIRTEENTH SERMON.

Hos. 14. 8.

——I am like a greene fare-tree, from me is thy fruit found.

THIS holy Prophet, as we heard heretofore, did prophecy more then fifty yeares among the tenne Tribes, even untill the time immediately preceding their captivity and misery, in like manner as *Jeremy* and *Ezekiell* did to the other *Jewes*. Now because in the worst times God alwayes had a remnant, and yet hath: Therefore it is the Prophets care in this

this Chapter which we have gon over, to instruct them in divers particulars of Reformation, as we have heard at large: *To returne to the Lord, to take words to themselves*: which *words* (as we have heard) are also taught them: backt with many sweet promises and incouragements, in Gods answer to their petitions. The last wherof insisted and stood upon was this, that God promiseth to be like a *greene firre-tree* unto *Ephraim* (who personated all the ten Tribes) *Ephraim* thought before to shadow and fence himselfe by Idols, and league with other Idolatrous Nations, which were like *Ionas* rotten gourd unto them, poore shadows and defences (but saith God) *I will be a fir-tree* for shadow to *Ephraim*, to defend him from all dangers whatsoever, and then in the next place he ads,

From me is thy fruit found.

A *firre-tree*, is a greene tree, but it hath no fruit, the excellencies of the creatures are applyed to God but not the defects. Therefore when comparisons are taken from the creatures and given to God, we must alway except the defects, supplying the same by some other clearing comparison. So God is not onely a *firre-tree* for shelter and defence, but he is a fruitfull tree, so a *firre-tree* is not, and therefore without comparison God hath more in him then any creature hath. For all that excellency which is in all the creatures is in him, and that in a farre more eminent manner: therefore he is both a shelter and fruit. If a passenger in distresse have

not

not only a *fir-tree* to shelter him and shadow him, but a fruit tree also to feed him, he thinkes hee is made, when God thus comforts him: So a Christian he hath not only shelter from the wrath of God, but he hath also a place of rest and quiet, the mercy of God to keepe him, and the Word and Sacraments to feed him. God is a fruit tree, as well as a *firre-tree*.

From me is thy fruit found.

That is, whatsoever is gratiously or comfortably good to us, in us, or issues from us, is all from God; hence first of all we observe for our instruction,

From a mans selfe comes nothing that is gratiously good. Observ.

Whatsoever is savingly good is altogether from God, *without me* (saith Christ) *you can doe nothing*: S. *Paul* was wondrous chary of this point, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. he saith, *he laboured more abundantly then they all*: *yet not I*, he recals himselfe, *but the grace of God in him that did all*: and of my selfe, as of my selfe, I cannot so much *as thinke a good thought*. It is from God that we have meanes to make us fruitfull, and from the gratious working of his Spirit comes it that they are effectuall; that we thinke a good thought, or open our mouthes to speake a good word, it is from Gods Spirit inabling us thereto. *Open thou my mouth*, (saith the Psalmist) *and my lips shall shew forth thy praise*. We are toung-tied, and our lips sealed unlesse God open them, we cannot speake one savoury seasonable Joh. 15. 5.

sonable word to further our accompt; we may speake empty words, but never a word comes from the heart that is gratious and good, but it must be by the Spirit of God. It is he who works all our works in us and for us. *He begins the good worke in us, and perfects it to the day of the Lord*, the truth of this is wondrous cleare.

Isa 26. 12. Phil. 1. 6.

If this be so, then undoubtedly the differences in the graces of men it is from another; meerly from God and Gods Spirit. There is indeed difference in men, but this is originally fetched from the grace of Gods Spirit. The good use of freedome that we talke so much of, it is from God, as well as the indowments of it. We have free will, but the use of it is not in our power, to use this or that at our pleasure: for, *It is God which gives the will and the deed*, of his good pleasure. Not only the deed, but the will too, we should make the will an Idoll else. For so many wils, so many Idols, if we thinke one man in himselfe can difference himselfe by his will.

Phil. 2. 13.

Again, in that God saith, *from me is thy fruit found*: we may learne hence,

Observ. *That fruit that is gratious comes from us and from God too.*

It is our fruit and Gods: so that there is a subordination of gratious workes under God: the fruit we have is from God, yet it is our fruit too. How can this be? Yes easily, we speake the words, but it is God that opens our lips. We beleeve, but it is God that gives us grace to beleeve. We doe the action, but God gives

Quest. Sol.

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us grace to do it. God opened the heart of *Lydia* to beleeve, so that God and we meete together in the same action. We have parts, understanding, will, affections, bodies and soules, therefore the actions are said to be ours, because God workes in us as understanding creatures, but God sets the wheele a going, so that the actions are originally his, and ours subordinately under him. *From me is thy fruit found.*

If so be that God and man joyne in one action, *From me is thy fruit found*, as though he should say, whatsoever thou hast or sayest that is good, it is from me; here we see how and why good workes cannot merit, though they come from God, as all goodnesse doth; yet in regard they come from us too, we add some tainture thereunto from our corrupt nature. What God and Christ himselfe doth is absolute and perfect, as Justification: but what fruit he works in us, there is somewhat of the old *Adam* in us, which taints the beauty of the work: it is Gods fruit comming from him, and yet our fruit also comming from us: which being so much tainted should humble us, in that we add nothing to the truth of Gods work in us, but abasement and defilement by our corruptions: *From me* (saith God) *is thy fruit found*, so much as is supernaturally good: but because our nature is not altered on the suddaine, but still tasts of the *old leaven*, therfore there can be no meriting of salvation by any workes we doe, because they are not perfectly good.

Why good workes cannot merit.

1 Cor. 5 7.

Vse. 1. *For Humiliation.*

The cleering of these points in our judge-

ment, they ſerve to worke in us a deepe Humiliation, ſeeing that we have nothing in our ſelves but ſtaines and defilements; all that is good in us comming from God. *From me is thy fruit found.* What is from our ſelves then, if all good in us comes from God? we are a barren and a curſed ſoyle, nothing that is good can come from us, even as the Earth was curſed after *Adams* fall, and brought forth nothing but briers and thornes, ſo our ſoule naturally is a curſed ſoyle in it ſelfe, and brings forth nothing but weeds and thornes. Our hearts are like the barren wilderneſſe, full of evill noyſome luſts and affections. Therefore this ſerves to abaſe us, that we be not lifted up with any good in us, for as that is altogether from Gods Spirit, ſo likewiſe we of our ſelves add nothing to it but ſomewhat which may diminiſh the value thereof.

Vſe 2. For information of judgement.

Heere againe for matter of judgement, you have a difference between the ſtate of nature, and the ſtate of grace, I meane of innocent nature, for in *Adam* we had a ſtanding in our ſelves, being truſted with our owne good, but now under the ſecond Covenant, under the ſecond *Adam*, Chriſt Jeſus, we have many graces to fit us for Heaven, and many good works we doe, but all the fruit we have and yeeld is from God. So that now this is a grand difference, *Adam* as it were had the keeping of his own happines locked up in himſelfe, but we have our happineſſe, graces, and whatſoever is good for us ſhut up in Chriſt, as the ſpring and fountaine, which is the reaſon

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of the perpetuall stability and permanent condition of Gods children, once his and ever his. And put the case we want this or that helpe, yet this prejudiceth not the perpetuity of the condition of Gods children, because those graces which come immediately from Gods Spirit, may be conveyed sometimes without meanes, as well as with them. Therefore whatsoever decay is in the branches that are graf ed into this noble Vine Christ Jesus, in whom wee bare all the fruit we beare; yet notwithstanding there is life everlasting for us in the roote, which is by little and little distilled into us. The leaves may fall, outward things may decay, but there is life alway in the roote of a Christian, because he is in Christ, and hath his fruit from him: he cannot want fruit, no more then Christ can want influence and vigor. Which shewes us the excellent state of a Christian under the new Covenant of grace, that now we fetch all out of our selves, and it is happy for us that we doe so. For without Christ we can doe nothing, as without the soule the body can doe nothing, so without the Spirit of Christ we can doe nothing, from him is all. This is the reason why we must not trust to any grace in our selves that comes from us, because grace comes from God in Christ, trust God the Spring whence it comes, whose the fruit is, God the Father in Christ, from whom all fulnesse comes, and is derived unto us: or else we make but an Idoll of grace, if we trust too much to grace, looke to the Spring whence all comes

Joh. 15. 5.

Ser. XIII.

comes to us: *From mee is thy fruit found.*

Quest. Againe, for further instruction; What is the Reason that some have more grace then others, and more comfort, some having grace and comfort in one degree, and some in another.

Sol. Hence it is, *from mee is thy fruit found*: it comes from the freedome of God in Christ, who according to his good pleasure gives the will and the deed, whence wee have grace sometimes in the vigour, sometimes in a weaker and lesser degree, the fault being in our selves too: yet notwithstanding there is a liberty in the Spirit of Christ, to give a more or lesse measure of grace, to shew that our good we doe springs not from our selves. Which also is the reason of the difference betwixt Christians, because God will shew that he is the disposer and the dispencer of his owne graces and comforts. And that is the reason also why wee must performe this duty of waiting upon God in the use of meanes, though we finde no sense of grace, and comfort from him for the present; *From him our fruit is found.* Waire his leasure, he suspends grace and comfort untill a fit time, in regard of the degree: but yet there is alway some grace left, though hee suspends the increase thereof untill a fit time, because hee would have us know that it is of his giving. Christians who are acquainted herewith, they will not tie God to their time, but humbly goe on in the use of meanes, who though they finde not their spirits and their comforts enlarged so

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as at other times, not so great, nor as other folkes are, yet can say, Lord thou giveſt the will and the deed according to thy good pleaſure, all comes from thee, therefore I will uſe the meanes and depend upon thee, becauſe I have all from thee freely. God gives a ſpirit of Prayer, and then the thing we pray for, all is from him, *From me is thy fruit found.* Doe we find the Ordinances fruitfull, the preaching of the Word to open our underſtandings, to kindle our affections, to inlighten our judgements, it is the Spirit of God that joynes with the meanes, that are dead of themſelves, to make them fruitfull: what are the Ordinances without God, but empty conduit pipes of themſelves? therefore, *From me is thy fruit found.*

This ſhould teach and direct us alſo in all things to looke up to God, in all uſe of meanes, Lord I may reade, heare, and uſe helpes and meanes long enough to little or no purpoſe, unleſſe thou give a bleſſing, *Paul* may plant and *Apollo* may water, but if thou give not fruite from Heaven, all is to no purpoſe. We forget this, and therefore proſper accordingly. We thinke we can worke fruit out of the meanes by our owne wit, Oh! It is not ſo, whatſoever is comfortable or gratious in the uſe of meanes, it is meerely by Gods bleſſing. And therefore ſeeing all our fruit whatſoever that is good comes from God, let it ſtirre us up to practiſe the ſpirituall worſhip of God, to adore God, to beg of his fulneſſe in Chriſt Jeſus: and like

Vſe. 3.

1 Cor. 3. 6.

likewise to resigne our selves in all conditions unto him, Lord I put my selfe upon thee, all my fruit is from thee, thou canst sanctifie any condition unto me. This adoration and resignation, are parts of the spirituall worship of God. And likewise the service of the Lord in feare and reverence, that inward service of the Spirit, all depends upon this, that all our fruit is from God: therefore I must serve him, and serve him as hee must be served in spirit and truth. What makes a man reverence another? I depend upon him, without him I sinke, will this make a man serve man? and will it not make us serve God, and serve him with feare? what breeds an awfull feare? this, that if he withdraw his influence I fall into sinne, despaire and discomfort: so that the ground of all feare of God, and service springing from this feare, it is from hence, that from him all my fruit, all my grace and comfort is found, therefore I must have grace to serve him, as a God in feare. For if the soule be not possest and seasoned with this heavenly doctrine, that all comes from him, then surely where is Gods service? what becomes of it? where is that adoration, and magnifying of God in our hearts? where's that putting off our selves upon him in all conditions?

Ioh. 4. 24.

Vse 4. Againe this inforceth another part of Gods spirituall and heavenly worship, cleaving to God in our affections, especially these two, in our Faith and Love, that as all comes from and by Christ Jesus, so thereby we may draw from him the

the fruit of grace and comfort. So that this ſpirituall cleaving and uniting of our ſoules to Chriſt, it comes from this, that I have all from him, therfore I muſt cleave to him, ſeeing whatſoever is ſpirituall, holy and comfortable, I muſt have from him. Therfore if we would worſhip God in ſpirit and truth as we ſhould doe, and ſet him up in his due place in the ſoule, let us labour to have our judgements ſanctified in this, that all comes from God. If we were ſurely grounded in the goodneſſe, mercy and riches of Gods grace, and knew that all our fruit comes and is from him, this would make us to conclude, that therefore it is reaſon that we ſhould worſhip him and depend upon him ſtrictly. As the Prophet ſpeakes of Idols, that they can neither doe us good nor harme, inforcing that they ſhould not feare them, ſo we may ſay of all other things diſtinct from God, they can neither doe good nor harme, except God inable them. Will you be ſlaves to men, they cannot doe good nor harme, but as God uſes them whoſe creatures they are. Therfore the worſhip of God is alſo founded hence; that God does all good or harme; if men doe it, they doe it from him, he gives them leave, as it is ſaid of *Shemei*, God bid him raile on *David*. If they doe us good, they are his conduits, whereby he deriveth good to us: therefore all is from him: we ſee then how all the true and hearty worſhip of God comes from this; *From me is thy fruit found.* Ier. 10. 5. 2 Sam. 16. 10.

This ſhould make us likewiſe as to worſhip *Vſe.* 5.

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God in spirit and in truth; so to be resolute in good causes whatsoever come of it, looke for a ground and then be resolute: because all comes from God, who will stand by us in his owne cause and quarrell.

But if I forsake this and that support, I shall lay open my selfe to injuries and wrongs.

Psal. 79. 10. Marke what the Spirit of God saith: *Yee that love the Lord hate that which is evill.* But if I hate that which is evill, Idols, *&c.* As *Ephraim* here doth, I shall be despised and trampled upon. No, (saith he) *God preserves the soules of his, he will be a*

Psal. 84. *shield and a buckler: a Sun and a shield, and no good thing shall be wanting to them that lead a godly life.* God will be a *Sun* for all good, and a *shield* to keep off all ill, therfore let us be resolute in good causes; Whence comes all shifting, halting, imperfect walking, and inconstancie in the wayes of God, but from this, that men know not where to have men: they are not grounded on this, that whatsoever is fruitfull and good comes from God, who will give whatsoever is fruitfull and good in depending upon him. This made the three children in *Daniell* couragious, they knew they should have fruit from God; that is, grace, comfort and peace, the best fruit of all. And

Dan. 3. 18. therefore *know O King, that we will not worship thine Idoll, nor fall downe before it.* So holy

Hest 4. 16. *Hester* being well grounded could say, *If I perish I perish:* I know the cause is good and if all helpe in the creature be removed and taken away, yet I shall have fruit in God.

Let

Serm. XIII.

Let us therefore carry this about us as a principle of holy life, to know that our good is hid up in God, and not in the creature; so that if all helpe were taken away, yet we have it immediately, purer and better in the fountaine. What if there were not a creature in the world to helpe me? what if all were against me? yet God may make all their powers and indeavours fruitfull. There is such fruit from God, that he can make the worst things which befalleth us fruitfull, when he pleaseth; there is a blessing in curses and crosses, a good fruit in them: who can doe him harme that God turneth the bitterest things he suffers to his good. Let none be daunted in a good cause, but goe on resolutly, seeing God hath all in himselfe. Was not *Moses* forty dayes without any earthly comfort on the mount? and Christ also without naturall sustentation so long? did not God give light without a Sunne in the first creation? wee are tyed to meanes but he is not. We thinke if such friends and helps be taken away, that then all is gone; but what were they? were not they meanes which God used at his good pleasure, and cannot he give comfort without them? yes certainely, the greatest comfort and grace is oft-times given immediately from God, when he salutes the soule by his owne Spirit, as he did *Paul* and *Sylas* in the dungeon, who in the midst of discomfort, had their spirits inlarged to sing hymns at midnight: God reserving that comfort for that time. Therefore seeing all comfort is from

Exod. 34. 28, Mat. 4. 2.

Act. 16. 25.

from God, and hee is not tyed to this or that meanes, nay can blesse all contrary meanes, is not this a ground of resolution?

Vse 6. Of comfort. Therefore now make a Use of Comfort of it, seeing all fruit is from God, who is in covenant with his children in Jesus Christ, and who will improove all his attributes for their good, his Wisedome, Goodnesse, Power and Mercy, let them therefore take comfort to themselves, that howsoever the world may take their friends from them, riches, liberty and what you will: can they take God and fruit from them? No, *From me is thy fruit found.* If they could take away the Spirit of God, grace and comfort from us it were something, but can they doe that? no, the worst they can doe, is to send us to Heaven, to the Fountaine of all grace and comfort: so that in this world they cannot cast us into any condition wherein wee cannot have communion with God, in whom all the scattered excellencies of the creature are gathered together meeting as it were in a center. It is hee that comforts us in our friends, that shewes bowels to us in our mothers, wisdome and care towards us in our parents. The bowels of a mother, the care of a friend, the strength of wise assistance, hath he not all in himselfe, if all be taken away? he hath all. Therefore let Christians comfort themselves, that they can never be in a condition wherin fruit shall be taken from them. The poore worldling labours all his life for fruite, riches

riches and friends, and when he dyes then his fruit faileth him and fals, his leafe withereth. What becommeth of his fruit then? he laboured for that which yeelds him nothing but vexation and death. But a Christian doth otherwise, he labours for grace and comfort, to keepe his communion and peace with God, and when all is taken away, either by the injury and wrongs of men, or by the extremity of the times, or as all will in the houre of death: his fruit is most after, in death and after death, more then can be by our narrow hearts conceived in the excellency thereof. O the excellent estate of a Christian! imagine such a one to have a tree that growes in Heaven, and sends forth fruit and branches to him in whatsoever state he is in. And so indeed God reacheth fruit from Heaven to the soule being in prison and misery. He reacheth from thence the fruit of grace, of spirituall strength and comfort, a blessed estate. Therefore let Christians comfort themselves in their condition, *that all their fruit is from him*: and that God especially will then shew himselfe aboundant, when they stand most in need of him. Other trees beare no fruit in winter and in stormes, but God giveth fruit most in the worst times. He is a God that comforteth the abject. As it is 2 *Cor.* 7. and here it is said, that *in him the fatherlesse findeth Mercy*: we have most fruit from him in the worst times, then especially he delighteth to shew himselfe a God, when no comfort can be had from the creature.

There-

Sect. XIII.

Against future feares.

Therefore doe not despaire, but lay up this against evill times, never feare for the time to come. Let the mountaines be cast into the midst of the Sea, and let the Earth and all rage, as the Psalmist sayes, and let things runne upon a head, come what can come, God is where he was, and Gods children are where they were, in regard of the maine comfort. They cannot be in such a condition, as that they can be deprived of their God, and of his assistance, *From me is thy fruit found.* Therefore care not for any condition that thou art in, this or that, thou shalt have that condition which shall be comfortable to thee: though many like beasts goe on, and looke for no fruit from God.

Psal. 46.2.

Vse 7.

And let this also be an Incouragement to walke with God sincerely and uprightly in all times, not fearing any creature, or danger from the creature, because our fruit is from God. What if we loose this or that, wee know what was said to *Amaziah* by the Prophet: but what shall become of the hundred talents, saith he, God is able to give thee much more, so in the losse of friends, having this and that tooke from us, let us comfort our selves, I but God is not taken from us. Hee who derives comfort by this or that friend, can supply it better by his owne Spirit. And whatsoever we part with in a good cause, let us remember what Christ saith: *Hee that parts with father or mother, with house or land for my sake, shall have a hundred fold in this world, and afterwards life everlasting.*

2 Chro. 25. 9.

Mat. 19. 29.

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Hee shall have all made up in grace, which is a hundred times better then any thing that is here, he shall have contentment which is better then the things themselves: sometimes he shall missing one worldly comfort, have more friends stirred up, but howsoever in want of one, he shall be supplied in an other comfort that he never dreamt of in this world. So that God is abundant to them that sticke close to him in sincerity, he shall find him abundant in the things of this life, in one comfort or other.

Therefore by these mercies of God here mentioned, let us be intreated to be in love with the condition of a Christian life; and say as *Ephraim* here, what have I any more to doe with my former corrupt courses, or Idols? give a peremptory answer to all sinnefull courses and suggestions, either from others, or from our owne corrupt nature. *What have I any more to do with you?* No, God shall be my God, for if I can resigne my selfe wholly to God, and renounce the creature and all things else, God will be as a *greene firre-tree*, and heare me; I shall loose nothing by it. Be then in love with a Christian course, for it is the sweetest and the safest course, and never wants comfort from Heaven, and it is the most honourable course that can be, for it will hold our communion and peace with the great God of Heaven and Earth: for though we breake with others, we shall be sure of him. In which case take heed of that base suggestion which the Divell himselfe, *Exhortation.*

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selfe was ashamed to owne, *That we serve God for nought.* What shall we renounce Idolatry and wicked courses, and thinke that God will not have fruit for us? shall I think if I leave my sinnefull gaine, that I or my posterity shall beg or starve for it? doe we serve a God that hath no fruit? that is as a dead tree, or a barren wildernes: No, we serve a God that had all in himselfe before he made the world, and hath all the excellency in himselfe contained in the creatures, it is not in vaine to serve him: *Doth Iob serve God for nothing?* said the Divell. Therfore it is a suggestion worse then satanicall, to think we serve God for nothing: or to thinke like those *Hypocrites* mentioned by the Prophet; that God regards not our fasting, or our devotion. No, we shall not loose a good word for God, nor a teare but he hath a bottle for it, not a sigh or a groane, or a farthing, not a minutes time well spent shall be lost, he will pay us for every ill word we indure for his sake, for every disgrace, losse or crosse, doe we serve that God there is no fruit in? *From me is thy fruit found?*

Job. 1. 9.

Isa. 58. 3.

Psal. 56. 8.

Whatsoever our condition be in the world, let us comfort our selves with these things, and think that it is not in vaine to serve the Lord: for we cannot serve a richer nor a more kind master and Lord: First of all he gives us opportunity and meanes whereby fruit may be wrought in us, and then he works the fruit of grace and comfort in us, and afterwards rewards and crownes his own fruit; but we add imperfections and in-

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ventions of our owne and ſo marre or ſtaine all, but we deale with a gracious God in covenant, who pitties us as a Father doth his children, accepts and rewards what is his, and pardons what is our own. Therfore let this much be effectuall for the guiding of our lives, and comforting of us in a good courſe. If we take ill courſes we muſt looke for no fruit from God, but fruits of his diſpleaſure; if we eate of the forbidden tree, we ſhall eate and reape *the fruits of our own waies*, bitter fruits, for in this caſe Jeſus Chriſt who is a ſweet Saviour, will be a Judge to us; and he who is *the Lambe of God* will be angry, ſo as we ſhall reape the fruit of his indignation: In the *Revelation*, divers are brought in *deſiring the hils and mountaines to fall upon them, to cover them from the preſence of the Lamb.* Let us not therefore turne a ſweet Saviour to a rigorous Judge, by adventuring upon courſes wherein we cannot looke for fruit: but let us commend *our ſoulves in well-doing unto him, as unto a faithfull Creator and Redeemer.* And as it is, *Prov. 3. Let us acknowledge him in all our weyes*, for it is good to acknowledge and looke to him: that is, looke to him for ſtrength, quickning, ſucceſſe, grace and light to direct us: acknowledge him in all our wayes, and treaſure up this comfort, that *all fruit is found from God.* If we take good courſes, we ſhall ever be fruitfull, and have fruit from him, *out of his fulneſſe*, for (ſaith he:) *From me is thy fruit found.*

Rev. 6. 16.

1 Pet. 4. 19.

The end of the thirteenth Sermon.

THE

THE FOVRTEENTH SERMON.

Hos. 14. 9.

Who is wise and hee shall understand these things? prudent and he shall know them? for the wayes of the Lord are equall, the just shall walke in them, but the transgressors shall fall therein.

THese wordes seale up the whole Prophecy; for the Prophet immediately before propheeying of the captivity, discovers to them at length their sinnes as we heard, their Idolatry, adding new Idols to their former Idols, *Baall* to the *Calves*, the Princes remooved the bounds, (old orders and lawes) the Prophets they were fooles and did not see the judgements of God hanging over their heads; and none of them all could see their

their *gray-haires*, that is, the figures of their owne ruine. After which out of a Christian love, care, and conscience of his duty, by direction of the Spirit of God, he prescribes an excellent way how they should carry themselves, by returning to the Lord, *take words unto your selves*, renounce all false confidence in *Assur*, and all domestick helps at home, horses and the like, and fly to God as your best Sanctuary. Then he shews what God will do to them, answer all the desires hee had put into their hearts: *I will heale their Backslidings and love them freely*, &c.

Now because these were great matters of great consequence, to make them either happy in the observing them, or miserable in neglecting them, you see how he shuts up all in a most weighty close: *who is wise and he shall understand these things, prudent and he shall know them, for the wayes of the Lord are equall*, &c.

Wherein the scope of the Prophet, is to stir up a holy regard of what hath bin spoken, he would not have all lost for want of attention or application, and therefore he here stirs them up to a holy use of all: which stirring up is excellently and figuratively cloathed with an *Epiphonema*, or acclamation, *who is wise and he shall understand these things*, &c. He doth not say, let men understand these things, but *who is wise and who is prudent?* Let them consider of these things, and then the *Exhortation* is backt with many Reasons.

1. It is wisdome and prudence to regard these things that I have spoken (*who is wise and who is prudent?*)

2. And then again they are the waies of God that are spoken off, and they are straight and equall in themselves.

3. And they lead to happinesse directly, without winding and turning, a man is sure to attaine his journeyes end in them, and if they will take example of those who onely are exemplary to them, he tels them *the Iust shall walk in them*, they shall not walk alone, they shall have the company of *a cloude of witnesses*, who prosper and walke on cheerfully in this way, and attaine happinesse in the end.

4. Then the last argument is taken from the contrary end of all them who cavill and snarle at Gods wayes and truth, that thinke themselves witty to pick quarrels with somwhat in Gods book, as it is a common fashion now a dayes to have a divinity of mens owne: *Transgressors*, such as are opposite to Gods wayes, *they shall fall in these wayes*, that is, they take offence at these waies and so fall into sin, and by falling into sin, fall into misery, till at last they fall into Hell, which is the end of all quarrellers with divine truth, they fall and dash themselves upon them, and so eternally perish.

Now these are strong and forcible reasons to inforce care and attention of what hath bin spoken, it is *wisdome* and *Prudence*, and *the wayes of the Lord* here *are streight*, and then *all godly people walke in them, and those that stumble at them are*

sure

sure to perish, and doe perish in them; not that they are a cause of their perishing, but by reason of the malice of men, finding fault and picking quarrels with them, they fal first into sin, and then into misery, thus we have the scope of the words.

Who is wise and he shall understand these things.

First of all, we must know that the Prophet here in this figurative speech makes a kind of exclamation, *who is wise?* he doth, as it were secretly mourne at the Apostacy and fewnesse of those that be truly wise, as if he had said, I have given you many directions, and shewed you what sins lead to destruction, I have shewed what course ye are to take, and the bounty of God to those that Return: but, *Who is wise and prudent to regard these things?*

In the words therefore (in regard of the speaker, the Prophet) we may observe this ere we come particularly to them: the character of a holy, mercifull, gratious, and wise man, that when he hath spoken things to excellent purpose, he would not have those things lost, but out of mercy and compassion mingled with a great deale of heavenly wisdome, would have the best fruit of all he hath spoken. Which was the custome of the men of God in the Scriptures, the Spirit of God leading them to strike the naile home, when they taught truths to lay the word close upon the conscience, as much as they could. What is the whole book of *Deuteronomy*, as the word signifieth, but a repeating of the former lawes? *Moses* thought

SER. XIV.

all to no purpose, unles he repeated laws, and fastned them upon the soule: so our Saviour Christ still when he had spoken excellent things, saith, *Let him that hath eares to heare, heare*, So saith *Ieremy, who is wise to consider these things?* and the conclusion of that excellent 107. *Ps.* is just thus, *who is wise to consider these things?* and *Deut.* 32. saith *Moses, O that they were wise, that they would think of these things*, &c. So every where in Scripture you have such fastning of things where truthes have bin spoken in application of them: which doth justifie the course of Gods Messengers in bringing the Word home unto mens consciences, because that which is spoken loosely in general, no man applyeth in particular to himselfe, wee who are Messengers of God, must therfore bring things home to the conscience: *who is wise and he shall understand these things*, &c.

Mat. 11. 15. Ier. 9. 12.

But that which more neerly concerneth us, is wheras first of all he propounds this exhortation to regard these things under this holy acclamation: *who is wise and who is prudent?* we see first of all,

Observ. *That there are but few who are truly wise and prudent.*

Few that enter the right way: for our Saviour sheweth that *narrow is this way, and few there be that find it.* The point needs not much proofe it is so plain, and well known, wherfore it is now touched only making way to other things. The Reason hereof is cleere.

Mat 7. 14.

Reason Most men we see live by sense, will and passion, and not by faith, whereby they inthrall the

wisdome

the wisdome they have, and make it prisoner to sinfull passions and affections, rejecting thoughts of their owne future happinesse: and though it behove them in this world to be broken of their will: yet they will have it here, though they perish and be damned for it hereafter. This is the state of the unbroken heart of man till he have grace in him. Yea it is the state of all men, especially those that are puft up, either by their own place, humour, or the flattery of others, they will have their will: *Mens mihi pro Regno*, as one said. Now this being the proud poysonfull nature of man, we must not thinke it a strange thing, that there are so few wise and prudent: for a man cannot be wise and passionate, for his passion transformes him to be a beast, a Divell. Now because most men live by sense and by humour, which is a life they are nuzled in (especially those that are subject to flatterers) therefore few come to be truly wise and prudent, to have so much stedinesse and sobriety of spirit, as to deliberate what is to be done. They will not in cold blood give leisure to their humors (but feed them) to consider what is best. This being the humour of the world, no wonder that there be so few prudent and wise.

Since things are thus, learne this of it, if there be so few prudent and wise, as the Prophets complaine in all times. *To whom is the arme of the Lord revealed*; and, *who hath beleeved our report*, &c. Then take heed of living by example, that we be not led away with the sway

Vse. 1.

Isa 53.1.

and error of the times: for seeing there are few *wise and prudent*, it is better and safer to follow one man reformed by judgement, then a thousand others, one man is worth a thousand who is led with judgement and by the Spirit of God.

Vse. 2. And likewise take no scandall, if you see men run upon heaps in the broad and worst way, for that men have alwayes done, it is the complaint of all the Prophets in all times, calling the better sort few: Isa 17.5,6. Ier.3.14. *as the grapes after the vintage, like a few scattered ears of corne after harvest: one of a citty, and two of a Tribe*, a few of all. Therfore now let us seale this truth with this exhortation.

Vse 3. That we labour to be of that few that are truly wise and prudent, examine, are wee of those few or not? and what have we in us that may secure us to be of this small number; for if we be not, we shall never be saved. For Christs flocke *is a little flocke*; Luk.12 32. and few there be that shall enter in at that straite gate: what hast thou then which may discover unto thine owne soule that thou art of that number, and not of the common multitude that shall be damned? it is a thing worth the inquiring of our soules; what have we in us that may characterise us to be Gods true servants, Christs true children, and members of the Church? and never rest in a common perswasion of common grace, which cast-awayes may have as well as we. We must strive for some distinct grace that reprobates can not attain unto.

Who is wise and he shall understand these things, prudent, &c.

But

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But to come more particularly to the words, *Who is wiſe and hee ſhall underſtand theſe things*, The holy man of God heere in his Exhortation, naming *Wiſedome*, ſingling out *wiſe and prudent* men; *who is wiſe, and who is prudent?* hee toucheth men upon the quicke right veine, for who is there that would not bee thought wiſe and prudent? A corrupt man naturally rather deſires to bee thought ſinfull then weake, judge him as you will, ſo you judge him not to be an unwiſe, an unprudent man. A proud man till he be ſubdued and humbled, had rather be thought diſhoneſt then ſimple, becauſe if hee be diſhoneſt, hee thinkes it is out of choice: but to be ſimple, this argueth imperfection, and not freedome and bravery of ſpirit: therefore it being the naturall deſire and inſtinct of all men to be thought wiſe and to be ſo, hee endeavours to worke upon that affection in them, *Who is wiſe*, &c. Well, ſaith he, I know you all deſire to be thought *wiſe* and *prudent* men, would you make it good that you are ſo indeed? beleeve my ſayings, this is the way, whoſoever is wiſe let him underſtand theſe things, and hee that is prudent let him hearken to theſe things that I have ſpoken.

Man at firſt when he had communion with wiſedome it ſelfe was a wiſe creature, till he hearkened to Sathan and ſo loſt all, *becomming as the beaſts which periſh.* Yet in that glorious building, ſince the corruption of nature this Pſal 49.12.

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amongst that rubbish is reserved, that above all things there is a desire to be happy and wise, which two desires are naturally the leading desires in men, *To desire to doe well, and to be wise.* Therefore the Prophet here upon that which is left in mans nature takes advantage to build true wisdome and knowledge indeed.

Definition of heavenly wisdome.

To come then in briefe to shew what this *wisdome and prudence* is, for there is some distinction between *Wisdome and Prudence. Wisdome* is a heavenly light set up in the soul by the Spirit of God, whereby it discerneth the generall truths concerning God, our selves, the state of the Church, the priviledges of Christianity, and such like: in sum it is a right divine apprehension of spirituall truths.

Definition of heavenly prudence.

And Prudence, this is a kinde of sharpenesse of spirit, whereby the Spirit of God directs the soule, knowing the right generall principles to particular cases. Prudence is an application of the generall knowledge of generall things to particulars, and is an ordering of the life in particular exigences and cases in a right order, according to the direction of the Spirit, as we have it, *Prov.* 8. *I wisdome dwell with prudence.* Divine *Wisdome* whersoever it is dwels with *Prudence*; that is, where God doth inlighten the understanding to conceive aright of the misteries of salvation, there it dwels with prudence, that is, it directs the soule to an orderly carriage of life towards God and man, and in regard of it selfe, every way as it should doe, in all estates, times

times and conditions, that is meant here by *prudence*, a particular gift whereby a man is fit to consult and deliberate of things in particular to be done, in particular cases of conscience, and the like. How *wisdom and prudence* they are both together in Gods people, howsoever perhaps one is more excellent then another. Some are wiser who have a deeper search of truths in generall: and some are more prudent in their walke, that are weaker Christians for the maine generall truths. Yet there is not a good Christian, but he hath so much *prudence* as will bring him to Heaven. But God giveth extraordinary wisdome to some, because they are leaders of others. Yet though in Gods dispensation there be a difference, yet in every Christian they are joyned together, there is no Christian but he is wise for himselfe, which is *Prudence*. This is as it were the salt which seasoneth all other graces, and knowledge whatsoever: for what is knowledge without discretion, but a foolish humour? what is patience but blockishnesse, if a man doe not discerne how, why and upon what ground to be patient? what is Religiousnesse without this, but superstition, and what is Zeale but an indiscreet heate, if it bee not seasoned with this Prudence? yea, and what is Constancy it selfe, but an indiscreet rigour and stifnesse without wit. So that it is the seasoning of all other graces whatsoever, that which puts bounds and measure unto all: Therefore hee joynes it with Wisdome, *who is wise and who is prudent?*

prudent, good as we say consists of a whole entire cause, unto which must be occurrence of all circumstances together, one defect may make it to be sinfull. So this is *Prudence* to observe a due order cloathed with circumstances of the manner and season of every good action and duty, therefore he joynes here *Prudence. Who is wise and he shall understand these things, prudent and he shall know them?*

Now these be the two graces that leade and guide a mans life: there must be first a generall understanding and light of the soule, and then there must be a particular light to apply this generall to particulars. *Prudence* is, as it were, the steward of the soule, which dispenceth the light thereof according to particular occasions.

Now for *Wisdome and Prudence*, we will not insist long on them, only we will draw towards a right discerning of them squared and proportioned to our understandings by resemblances of other things: for a man may know what they are in divine things, by some proportion to humane things, what they are there, as to give a little light to it.

Signes of worldly wisdome.

1. He is a *wise, prudent man* in the world that will be sure to make the greatest his friend. So God being the greatest of all and most able to do us good, he is a wise and prudent man that makes him his friend, and cares not who he break with, so he break not with God.

2. And we account him also a *wise and prudent* man in the world, that like the wise steward in the

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Mar. 16. 3.

the Gospell provides for the worst there: to what course did he take for himself herein, he provides for, as he fore-sees danger. So spirituall wisdome and prudence will direct a man what is best for his latter end, his eternall rest and happines in another world. Heavenly wisdome presenteth to a man a full view of his latter end, and that which followeth thereupon in another world, and so makes him provide before hand, and direct all things to that end. A wise man will not have things to seek, when he comes to make use of them, like the foolish Virgins who had their oyle to seek, when they should have had it ready. He is truly spiritually wise, to wade his latter end, that as he knows there is a state to come, so is truly prudent to have all things ready against that time, that considering the uncertainty of this life, he may not be surprised unawares, like those glorious virgins who had a lamp without oyle.

And amongst men he is also counted a *wise* and *prudent* man, that makes a right choice, for this is *wisdome*, when a man discerneth a difference, and answerably makes his choice. *Simile mater erroris*, saith one, Likenesse is the mother of errour. There is a likenesse between good and bad in the world, and betweene truth and errour, now he is a wise man, who is not catcht with these resemblances, but discerneth a difference between temporall and eternall things, shadowes and substances, realities and appearances of things, and suitably chooseth eternals before temporals, the favour of God before the favour

3.

your ends, and in a word those things which concerne everlasting happines, before those that are perishing. *Wisdome* is seen in choyce. By these few instances named, we may see what heavenly *wisdome* and *prudence* is, by proportion of *wisdome and prudence* in earthly things. Now considering that there is a better state in another world then in this, he must needs be a wise man that orders things so, as that he may not loose eternity. Most men in the world are penny wise and pound foolish, as we say: wise to a particular end, to get particular favors and riches, so to satisfie their intentions: but for the main which is *wisdom* indeed, to look to their last estate and happines, and to fit their actions and courses that way, how few are wise to purpose? how few provide for eternity? therfore no marvell the Prophet saith, *who is wise and who is prudent?* because men live by sense and not by Faith.

Deut. 32. 29.

Who is wise and he shall understand these things? prudent and he shall know them?

Now the next thing to be observed hence is this, *That the wise & prudent only know these things.*

Observ.

There must be *wisdome and prudence* before wee can know divine Truths and make use of them:

Observ.

and then observe further, *That true wisdome and prudence carries them to Gods Word. Who is wise to understand these things?* by divine truth wee grow *wise & prudent*, the Spirit joyning with the same, & then we come to make a right use of the: there must be first a spiritual *wisdome & prudence* in light. ned by the Spirit, ere we can make use of the word

aright

aright to taste and relish it. Because though the word be light, yet light alone is not sufficient to cause sight, but there must concur unto the outward light an inward sight: grace must illuminate the understanding and put a heavenly light into the soule. As by the light within meeting with the light without, the eye being the instrument of sight, applying it selfe to the thing, thence comes sight. So there be divine truthes out of us, wherwith when the Holy Ghost puts an inward light into the soul, sanctified *wisdom and prudence*, then the inward light meeting with the light without, we see and apprehend. The Spirit therfore must joyne to work *Wisdome and Prudence*. Naturally we are all dead and have lost our spirituall senses, therfore the Spirit of God must work in us spirituall senses, sight and taste, that we may see, discern & relish heavenly things; which ere we can do, there must be an harmony betwixt the soule and the things, that is the soule must be made spiritual, answerable to the heavenly things pitched upon, or els if the soul be not set in a sutable frame, it can never make a right use of them.

Now when the understanding of a man is made wise by the Spirit of God, it will relish *Wisdome and Prudence*. For the Spirit of God together with the Scripture takes the scales off the eyes of the soule, subdues rebellious passions in the affections, especially that rebellion of the will, putting a new relish in all, so as they come to love, affect and joy in heavenly things. Now when these scales of spirituall blindnes are fallen

len off the eyes of the soule, and when rebellion is removed from the will and affections, then it is fit to joyne and approve of heavenly things, else there is a contrariety and Antipathy betwixt the soule and these things: as the body when the tounge is affected with some aguish humor, cannot relish things, though they be never so good, but affects and relisheth all things suting that distemper. So it is with the soule when it is not inlightned, it judgeth all things carnally, there being an Antipathy between the soule and divine truths brought home unto it, perhaps a soule not inlightned or sanctified will apprehend the generallities of truth very well: but when they are pressed home to practise, then unles the soule be changed, it will rise up and swell against divine truths, and reject the practise of them. Without subduing grace to alter and change the soule, the affections therof are like the March Suns, which stir up a great many humors, but not spending them, they breed aguish humors and distempers. So the light of the word in a carnall heart, it meets with the humors of the soul and stirs them; but if there be not grace in the soule to subdue these affections, it stirs them up to be the more malicious, especially if they be prest to particular duties in leaving of sinfull courses: so that the Spirit of God must alter the understanding, and subdue the will and affections, ere there can be a conceiving of divine truths savingly. Therfore before these acts, he joynes these graces: *Who is wise, and who is prudent*, &c.

The

The uſe hereof is this much, not to come to the divine truth of God with humane affections and ſpirits, but to lift up our hearts to God. Why Lord as things themſelves are ſpirituall, ſo make me ſpirituall, that there may be a harmony between my ſoule and the things, that as there is a ſweet reliſh in divine truths, ſo there may be a ſweet taſt in me, to anſwer that reliſh which is in divine truths, that the wiſdome of thy word and my wiſdome may be one, then a man is wiſe. There is not the commoneſt truth, or practicall point in Divinity, but it is a miſtery and muſt be divinely underſtood, and muſt have *prudence* to go about it as we ſhould do. Repentance and the knowledge of ſin, it is a miſtery, till a man be ſanctified in his underſtanding, he can never know what ſpirituall miſery is, till the inward man bee inlightned and ſanctified to know what a contrariety there is between ſin, and the Spirit of God. As no man can know throughly what ſicknes is, but he that hath bin ſick, for the Phiſitian doth not know ſicknes ſo well as the patient who feels it. So it is with a holy man ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt, tell him of ſin, he feels it, and the noiſomnes of it, the oppoſition of it to his comfort and communion with God. Only the ſpirituall inlightned man can tell what Repentance, ſin, ſorrow for ſin, and the ſpirituall health of the ſoul is. Therefore it is ſaid here, *Who is wiſe, and who is prudens? and he ſhall underſtand theſe things.*

Vſe.

The end of the fourteenth Sermon.

THE FIFTEENTH SERMON.

Hos. 14.9.

Who is wise and he shall understand these things? prudent and he shall know them? for the wayes of the Lord are right, the just shall walke in them, but the transgressors shall fall therein.

AT length by divine assistances, we are come unto the conclusion of this short Chapter, wherin the Holy Ghost from God hath shewed such bowels of mercy and tender compassion unto miserable sinners, incouraging them to returne unto the Lord, by many and severall arguments, being formerly insisted upon: our last

laſt worke was to ſhew you what *wiſdome* and *prudence* was, the difference of them, and how that none without theſe endowments are able to know and make uſe of divine truthes and miſteries of Religion. *Who is wiſe and he ſhall underſtand theſe things? prudent and he ſhall know them?* &c.

We came then to ſhew that there muſt be *Prudence* and *Wiſdome*, before we can underſtand divine Truths, there muſt be an illumination within: it is not ſufficient to have the light of the Scripture outwardly, but there muſt be a light of the eye to ſee: there muſt be *wiſdome* and *Prudence* gathered from the Scriptures. Now *Wiſdome* and *Prudence*, if they be divine (as here is meant) it is not a diſcreet managing of outward affaires of our perſonall condition, but an ordering of our courſe to Heaven-ward. Wherefore a man may know whether he be *wiſe* and *prudent* by his reliſhing of divine Truthes, for otherwiſe hee is not *wiſe* and *prudent* in theſe things which are the maine.

Now having ſhewed, that onely the *wiſe* and *prudent* can conceive and make a right uſe of theſe great things delivered, he comes to ſhew and defend the equity of Gods wayes, how crooked ſoever they ſeeme to fleſh and blood: theſe things ought to be hearkned unto, becauſe they are the wayes of God.

The wayes of the Lord are right.

By *wayes* here hee underſtandeth the whole Law and Goſpell, the whole word of God, which he calleth *right*, not onely becauſe

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1. *They are Righteous in themſelves, but*
2. *Becauſe they reforme whatſoever is amiſſe in us and rectifie us,* and
3. *Worke whatſoever is needfull for our good and ſalvation.*

Now more particularly, *Gods wayes* are

1. *Thoſe wayes wherein he walks to us:* or
2. *The wayes that he preſcribes us to walk in,* and
3. *Our wayes as they are conformable to his.*

Any of theſe are the wayes of God, of all which more hereafter.

1. *Gods wayes to us.*

The wayes wherein he walkes to us, becauſe many of them are untraceable as unſercheable to us, are not here meant. As thoſe of *Election, Predeſtination* and *Reprobation:* the reaſons whereof, if we take them comparatively, cannot be ſearched out, why God ſhould take one and not another, it is an unſercheable way. But take a man ſingle (out of compariſon) the wayes of God will appeare to be right, even in that harſh decree which many men ſtumble ſo much at, for none are ever brought in the execution of that decree to be damned, but you ſhall ſee *the wayes of the Lord right,* who a long time together offers them a great deale of mercy, which they refuſing, and reſiſting the Holy Ghoſt, taking wilfully contrary courſes, work out their own damnation. So that at length the iſſue of thoſe unſerchable wayes will appeare to be right in every particular, howſoever the comparative reaſon at the firſt, why God ſingles out one man and not another will not appeare.

As

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As for the *wayes of his Providence*, in governing the world and ruling of his Church, this is the way of God which is right: all which wayes though we cannot in all particulars ſee in this world; yet in Heaven in the light of glory we ſhall ſee what cannot now be ſeene in the light of grace and nature. For there be miſteries in *Providence*, who can tell the reaſon why of men equally good one ſhould be ſorely afflicted, and the other ſhould goe to Heaven without any affliction in a ſmooth way? none can give a reaſon of it, but we muſt ſubſcribe to the hidden wiſdome of God, whoſe wayes are unſercheable in his *Providence*, yet are they moſt right, though they be above our conceit. If we could conceive all Gods wayes, then they were not Gods wayes: for in his waies to us, he will ſo carry them as he will ſhew himſelfe to be above and beyond our ſhallow conceits.

2. *The wayes of his Providence, &c.*

But the wayes eſpecially here meant, are the wayes which he preſcribes us to walke in, and they are,

1. *What we muſt beleeve*, and then,
2. *What we muſt doe*, there is,
Firſt, *Obedience of Faith*, and then
Obedience of Life.

Theſe are Gods wayes preſcribed in the word and only in the word.

3. *Our wayes joyning with Gods wayes.*

Now *our wayes*, when they joyne with *Gods wayes*, that is, when our life, purpoſes and deſires of the inner-man, in our ſpeeches, carriage and converſation agree with Gods wayes, then

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in ſome ſort they are Gods wayes, *the juſt ſhall walk in them.* They ſhall walk in theſe waies, that is, in thoſe waies which God preſcribeth. As for thoſe waies wherein God walkes to us, we have not ſo much to do here to conſider them. But by walking in the wayes which he preſcribes, we ſhall feele that his wayes to us will be nothing but mercy and truth. *The wayes of the Lord are right,* thoſe wayes that he preſcribes to men to be beleeved and done, they are right & ſtreight, that is, they are agreeable to the firſt rule of all. Right is the judgement and will of God: He is the firſt truth and the firſt good, the prime truth and good, which muſt rule all others, *Menſura menſurans,* as they uſe to ſpeake in Schooles, the meaſure that meaſures all other things: for all other things are only ſo farre right, as they agree to the higheſt meaſure of all, which is Gods appointment and will. So *the wayes of God* are ſaid to be *right,* becauſe they agree to his word and will: they are holy and pure, as himſelfe is juſt, pure and holy.

Pſal. 25. 16.

The wayes of the Lord are right.

Right, as they agree to that which is *right* and ſtreight, and right likewiſe, becauſe they lead directly to a right end. We know a right line is that which is the ſhorteſt betweene two tearmes, that which leads from point to point is the ſhorteſt of all other lines. *So Gods wayes are right and ſtreight,* there are no other wayes which tend directly to happineſſe, without error, but Gods wayes, all other wayes are crooked

crooked wayes. So Gods wayes are right, as they looke to God, and as they looke unto all other inferiour courses they are *right* to examine all our wayes by, being the rule of them. And they are *right*, as they looke to Gods will and are ruled by him. *The wayes of the Lord are right.*

Hence observe we in the first place, that the first thing we should looke to in our conversation, must be to know this for a grand principle, *That man is not a prescribing but a mere way, and that no creatures will is a rule.* We must imbrace therefore no opinion of any man, or any course injoyned or described by any man, further then it agrees with the first *truth* and the first *right*, *Gods wayes are right*, as a standard that is a measure to measure all other measures by. So Gods *will* and *truth* revealed is a right rule, and the measure of all other rules whatsoever. Directions therefore which we have of things to be believed and done from men, must be no further regarded then as they agree with the first standard. Therefore they are mistaken, and desperately mistaken, that make any mans will a rule, unlesse it be subordinate to that which is higher, and which then it becommeth all one with the higher rule. When a man subordinates his directions to Gods, then Gods and his are all one. Otherwise without this subordination, wee make men gods, when wee make their will a rule of our Obedience. *The wayes of the Lord are right.*

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But of this onely a touch by the way: the maine point hence is,

Observe. *The Word of the Lord is every way perfect and brings us to perfection.*

As we may see at large prooved *Psal.* 19. 7, &c. Where whatsoever is good, comfortable, profitable or delightfull, either for this life or the life to come, is all to be had from thence. And the Wiseman saith, *Prov.* 30. 5. *Every word of God is pure,* &c. A similitude taken from gold which is fined till it be pure, as it is expressed in another place, *Psal.* 12. 6. *The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tryed in a furnace of earth, and purified seven times.* And so the Apostle to *Timothy.* 2 Tim. 3. 16. *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Correction, for Reproofe, for Instruction in Righteousnesse, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good workes.*

Use 1. Since then the wayes of God are so right, just, pure and perfect, this is first for Reproofe of them that add hereunto: as our Romish adversaries, who do herein by their traditions and additions, condemne God either of want of Wisedome, Love and Goodnesse, or of all. So as all defects charged upon the Word, are charged upon God himselfe, who did not better provide and fore-see for his Church what was good for it. But the Wise man condemneth this their audacious boldnes, where he saith, *Prov.* 30. 6. *Add thou not unto his words, least he reprove thee, and thou be found a lyar.* They barre reading of the Scriptures, or to read them in english especially, least the people

people become Hereticks. They thinke it safe to reade their owne bookes and idle dreames, but reject the Word of God, and then (as Ieremy speakes) *What wisedome is in them?* Surely none at all, for the only wisedome is to be governed by Gods most holy Word. Jer. 8. 9.

Againe, it is for Instruction unto us, to rest and rely upon this so holy, right, pure and perfect word. Since it is so sure and firme, we are to rest upon the Promises, and tremble at the threatnings, though we see not present performance of them, because not one of them shall faile. For (saith Christ) *Heaven and Earth shall passe away, but one jot and title of the Law shall not faile.* What maketh so many judgements to overtake men, but their unbeliefe? what made their carcases to fall in the wildernesse, so as they could not enter into the land of *Canaan*, but their unbeliefe? for (saith the text of them) *They could not enter, because of unbeliefe.* Infidelity and not beleeving God, is the roote and cause of all our woe. It beganne with our first Parents, and it cleaveth too close unto us, even unto this day. This commeth from our Atheisme and selfe love, that if a mortall man promise or sweare unto us, we beleeve him and rest upon his word: but all that the great God can doe unto us by Promises, Commandements, Threatnings, Allurements, and gratious Examples, will not make us give credit to his word, but rather believe Satan, and our owne false and deceitfull hearts. As for in-

Psal. 2.

Mat. 5. 18.

Heb. 3. 19.

stance, God hath promised, that *if our sins were as red as scarlet, yet he will make them white as snow*; though they be never so strong for us, yet *he hath promised to subdue them*. If our wants be never so great, yet if we will trust in God, he hath promised to relieve us, and hath said, *that he will not faile us nor forsake us*, if we cast our care upon him. So for the threatnings, we must beleeve that there is never a one of them, but they shall come to passe, as sure as the promises shall be made good. If these thoughts were firmely setled in us, that *the wayes of the Lord are right*, and therefore must be all accomplished in their time, it would make us restlesse to flie from sin, and the punishments threatned, which all *lye at the doore*, and will quickly be upon us, if they be not avoyded by sound and hearty Repentance.

Isa. 1. 18.
Isa. 50. 10.
Heb. 13. 5.
Gen. 4. 7.

Use. 3. Lastly, if every commandement be right sure and just, then when God commandeth doe it, though the apparent danger be never so great and though it be never so contrary to flesh and blood, pleasure, profit or preferment, yet know it is sure and sure, and that our happinesse stands in doing it, our misery in disobeying it. As we know it was with *Adam*: what a suddaine change did his disobedience worke in himselfe, all the world since being leavened with that miserable contagious fall of his. And for the whole word, this is a generall, we never want any good, but for want of love and obedience unto it. *Great prosperity shall they have* (saith *David*) *that love thy law, and no evill shall come unto them.*

Psal. 119. 165.

them. And we never had nor shall have any hurt, but from our unbeliefe and disobedience to the holy, pure and perfect word of God, which is attended with comfort and prosperity here, and endlesse glory hereafter. Ser. XV.

The wayes of the Lord streight.

In the next place, *If the wayes of the Lord be right and streight*, so streight that they leade directly to the right end, then it is cleere,

That the best way to come to a good and right end is to take Gods wayes. For it is a right way, and the right way is alwayes the shortest way. Therefore when men take not Gods wayes, prescriptions and courses, they go wide about, and seldome or never come to their intended end. Gods *way* is the *right way*, and therefore brings a man to his right end. Sometimes men will have their turnings, their *diverticula* and vagaries, but they find by experience that *Gods wayes* they are the *right wayes*, so as they never attaine to comfort and peace untill they come againe into those *wayes*. God untill then suffereth them to be snared and hampered, and to eate the fruit of their owne waies, and then they see the difference of Gods waies and theirs, and that Gods waies are the best, and the streightest waies unto true happines. Indeed God suffers sometimes men that will have their owne wayes, to come quickly to them, as some men hasten to be rich, and God suffers them to be rich hastily: yet they are none of Gods wayes which they take, but climbe up by fraud and deceit. But that is only Observ.

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only a particular end, which God suffereth them to attaine by bie wayes: but what will be the upshot? Where will all these wayes end at length? surely in Hell. For when a man goes out of the right, and streight, and direct way, to be great in the world, he is like a man who goes out of his way, which is further about, who yet when he is in that way goes on through thicke and thinne, because he will gaine some way. Hee goes on through thickets and hedges, faire and foule, where hee gets many scratches, bruises and knocks. Do any think in the world to attaine his particular ends, without the direct wayes of God, God may suffer him to attaine his particular end, but with many flawes, knocks and bruises upon his conscience, which many times he carrieth with him unto his grave, and findes it a great deale better, both to attaine unto his particular ends by *Gods wayes*, and to have no more of any thing in the world then he can have with a good conscience. For though they be good men, oft-times God suffers such men to have bruises in their conscience all their dayes; that they and others may know, that the best way, is the streight and right way, which at last will bring us best to our end.

Having thus made it good, *That the wayes of the Lord are right*; now for conclusion of all, the Prophet begins to shew the divers effects these *right wayes of God* have in two sorts of people, the *godly and wicked*.

1. *That the just shall walke in them:*

2. *That*

2. *That the transgressors shall fall therein.*

The just shall walke in them; who be the just men here spoken of? Such are just men who give to every one their due, that gives God his due in the first place, and man in the second place, whereby it is framed. *The just shall walke in them*; that is, they shall proceed and goe on in them till they be come to the end of their race, the Salvation of their soules. And more particularly.

Who be just men?

Just men, first are such, who have a respect unto all Gods commandements. *Psal.* 119. 6. Though in their disposition they find some more hard to them then others, yet they doe not allow themselves to breake any, but strive so much the more earnestly and constantly to observe them, as they find their natures opposite to them. Now Hypocrites howsoever they doe many things in shew, yet like *Herod* and *Judas*, their hearts run in a wrong channell, they allow themselves to live in, and like of some sinne. The young man in the Gospell, had not a respect unto all Gods Commandements, though Christ loved his amiable parts; to this purpose *Iames* saith, *Whosoever shall keepe the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, hee is guilty of all.* That is, he who alloweth himselfe in any one sinne, he is guilty of all. Aske *Judas*, is murder good? he would have said no: but hee was covetous and allowed himselfe in it, and so drew upon him the guilt of all the rest. God is hee who forbids sinning against them all: hee who forbids one, forbids

1. *They respect all Gods Commandements.*

Mat. 19.

Iam. 2. 10.

forbids all: and being rightly turned to God, the same authority makes us leave all: it is not sin, but the allowance of it that makes an Hypocrite.

2. *They do things to a good end.*

Againe, they doe things to a good end, the glory of God, and the good of man. For want hereof, the almes, prayers and fasting of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* (because they did nothing out of love to God or man, but for vaine glory and carnall respects) are condemned of Christ. So some are brought in at the last day saying, Mat. 7. 22. *Lord, Lord, have we not in thy name prophecied, and in thy name cast out Divels, and in thy name done many wonderfull works:* and yet Christ professeth not to know them, but calleth them *workers of iniquity*. They had *Gifts* and *Calling* and delivered true doctrine, &c. But here was their failing, *They prophecied in his Name, but not for his Name.* Their actions were good in themselves, and for others, but the end of them was naught, and therefore both they and their workes are condemned. Yet this is not so to be understood, but that Gods children have some thoughts of vaine glory which accompanieth and creepeth into their best actions, but they doe acknowledge this for a sin, confesse it, and desire the Lord to pardon and subdue it, and then it shall never be laid to their charge. Because having of infirmities is not contrary to sincerity, but allowing of them, and living in them, in which case the Lord is more pleased with our humiliation for our sinne, then the motions to vaine-glory did offend him.

Thirdly

Thirdly, a desire to grow in grace and to become better and better is a signe of uprightnesse: Christian Righteousnesse, as it sees still need, so it still desires more grace and lesse sin, because he who hath a true heart, seeth both the want and worth of grace, & feeleth his want. A man feeles not the want of Faith, Humility and Love, till he have it in some sort, as it is said, *Phil.* 3.15. *As many as are perfect are thus minded*, to wit, so many as are upright, all is one.

3. *A desire to grow in grace.*

Lastly, this just uprightnesse is knowne by love of the Brethren: *By this we know we are translated from death to life, because we love the brethren.* Contrary to which is that disposition which envieth at all things which suites not with their humours, as *Iames* speaketh of those who preferre men, and have their persons in admiration in regard of outward things despising inferiours.

4. *By love of the brethren.* 1 Joh. 3.14. Iam. 2.2.

If therefore we will ever be counted righteous persons, let us keepe these rules set downe here; have a respect to all Gods Commandements, do all things to the glory of God, desire to grow in grace, and love the brethren. *Vse* 1.

And so it is also for Consolation unto such who are thus qualified: for unto them belongeth all the promises of this life and of that to come, they are in a blessed estate, for *all things are theirs*, because they are Christs, therefore it is their bounden duty having an upright heart to rejoyce in God, as the Prophet speakes: *Rejoyce in the Lord ye righteous, for praise is comely for the upright.* None have cause to rejoyce but upright men. 2. 1 Cor 3.22. Psal. 33. 1. Psal. 32. ult.

1. Be-

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1. Because they of all others have title and right to joy: 2. Because they have command to doe it, seeing Heaven is theirs, all the promises are theirs, and they are heires of all things: it is a comely service and the work of Heaven.

Object. Against this some object. O but I find many sinnes, passions and infirmities in my selfe, how then can I joy in God.

Answ. To this we answer briefly, that the passions and infirmities of Gods servants, are not contrary to Christian uprightnes and righteousnesse: for Saint *Iames* saith, that *Elias was a man subject to like passions and infirmities as we are,* yet he was a righteous man, though a man subject to the like passions as we are. Therefore the passions of Christians are not contrary to Christian, but to legall righteousnes. But *we are not under the Law but under Grace.* The first Covenant of works bids us have no sin. The other Covenant bids us allow no sin, this much is for that Question, what is meant by *just men.* It remaines now that we should further enquire into that mysterie, how it is that *just men walke in the wayes of God,* and prosper therein: when yet wicked men called *transgressors* fall therein. But this being a mistery, by your patience we will take time to unfold what we have to speake hereof the next time if God be so pleased.

Jam. 5. 17

Rom. 6. 15.

The end of the fifteenth Sermon.

THE

THE SIXTEENTH SERMON.

Hos. 14. 10.

——The wayes of the Lord are right, the just shall walke in them, but the transgressors shall fall therein.

GODS Children have their times of deadnesse and desertion, and againe their times of quickning and rejoycing: weeping doth not alwayes remaine unto them for their portion, *but joy commeth in the morning*: in the worst times the Saints have alwayes some comforts afforded them which supporteth them against all the stormes and tempests they indure: they have alwayes a *Goshen* to fly too, others shall perish in that way wherein they shall walke and escape. Psal. 30. 5.

The just shall walke in them, but the transgressors shall fall therein.

Thus

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Thus farre we are now come in the unfolding of this Chapter, having ſhewed Gods rich and incomparable mercies to miſerable and penitent ſinners, how ready God is to embrace ſuch, as this rebellious people named were, with all the arguments uſed to make them returne unto the Lord: we are now come at laſt unto the upſhot of all, a diſcovery of the ſeverall effect and work Gods word hath upon both ſorts of people here named and aymed at.

The juſt ſhall walke in them, but the tranſgreſſors ſhall fall therein.

Theſe were very bad times: yet there were juſt men, who walked in the wayes of God, ſo that we ſee.

In the worſt times God will have alwayes a people that ſhall juſtifie wiſedome.

God will have it thus, even in the worſt times, that *the juſt ſhall walke in them*: though before he ſaith, *Who is wiſe and who is prudent?* yet here he ſhewes that there ſhall be a number who ſhall *walk in Gods wayes*. Who though they go to Heaven alone, yet to Heaven they will though they have but a few that walk in Gods wayes with them, they will rather goe with a few that way, then with the wicked in the broad way to Hell: alway God hath ſome who ſhall walk in his way: for if there were not ſome alway who were good, the Earth would not ſtand, for good men they are the Pillars of the world who uphold it. It is not for wicked mens ſake that God upholds the frame of the creatures, and that orderly govern-

ment,

ment, we ſee all is to gather together the number of his elect, of whom in ſome ages ther are more and in ſome leſſe of them borne, therafter as God breaths and blows with his Spirit. For according to the aboundant working of the Spirit, is the number of the elect. Yet in all ages there are ſome, becauſe it is an Article of our Faith, to believe *a holy Catholike Church*. Now it cannot be an article of Faith unles there were alway ſome that made this Catholike Church: for els there ſhould be an act of faith without an object. Therfore we may alwayes ſay; I believe that there are a number of elect people that walke in the wayes of God to Heaven-wards.

The diſpoſition of juſt men in their places.

And what is the diſpoſition of theſe ſome? to have a countermotion to thoſe of the times and places they live in. Some are, fooliſh, not caring for the wayes of God, cavilling at them. But the *juſt ſhall walke in them*; that is, they take a contrary courſe to the world that ſleights wiſdome. Thus in all times it is the diſpoſition of Gods children to goe contrary to the world in the greateſt matters of all. They indeed hold correſpondency in outward things, but for the maine, they have a contrary motion. As we ſay of the Planets, that they have a motion contrary to the wrapt motion, being carried and hurried about every twenty foure houres with the motion of the Heavens: they have another motion and circuit of their owne which they paſſe alſo. So it is with Gods people, though in their common carriage they be carried with

the common cuſtomes and fashions of the times: yet they have a contrary motion of their owne, wherby being carried by the help of Gods Spirit they goe on in a way to Heaven though the world diſeerne it not, they have a ſecret contrary motion oppoſite to the ſins and corruptions of the age and times they live in. Therfore in all ages it is obſerved for a commendation to goe on in a contrary courſe to the preſent times. *Noah* in his time, *Lot* in his time, and *Paul* in his time, who complains, *All men ſeeke their owne:* It is a ſtrange thing that *Paul* ſhould complain of all *men ſeeking their owne*, even then when the blood of Chriſt was ſo warme, being ſo lately ſhed, and the Goſpell ſo ſpread: yet *all men ſeeke their owne*. And he ſpeakes it with teares, but what became of *Paul* and *Timothy* and the reſt? *But our converſation is in Heaven from whence we looke for the Saviour, the Lord Ieſus Chriſt*, &c. Let all men ſeeke their owne here below as they will, we have our converſation contrary to the world. *Our converſation is in Heaven*, &c. So that they hold out Gods Truth in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe generation, that is when every man takes crooked wayes and courſes in carnall policy, yet there are a company that notwithſtanding, walk in the right wayes of God cleane contrary to others. The juſt will walke in the right wayes of God. As holy *Ioſhua* ſaid, *Chooſe you what you will doe, but howſoever I and my fathers houſe will ſerve the Lord.* So when many fell from Chriſt for a fit, becauſe his Do-

Gen. 6.
Gen. 18.
Phil. 2, 21.
Phil. 3. 20.
Ioſh. 24. 15.

Doctrine ſeemed harſh, *Peter* juſtified that way, when Chriſt asked him, will yee alſo leave me with the reſt who are offended? *Lord* (ſaith he) *whether ſhall we goe?* we have taſted the ſweetnes of the word, and felt the power therof: *whether ſhall we go Lord, thou haſt the words of eternall life.* So Gods people have an affection, carriage and courſe contrary to the world. Ioh. 6. 68.

The Reaſon is taken from their own diſpoſition, they are partaker of the divine nature, which carrieth them up to God-wards againſt the ſtream and currant of the time. *Reaſon* 2 Pet. 1. 3.

The Uſe hereof ſhall be onely a Tryall of our ſelves in evill times, whether or not then we juſtifie Gods wayes and the beſt things. If we do it is a ſigne we are of the number of Gods elect: to defend and maintaine good cauſes and right opinions, eſpecially in divine truths, which is the beſt character of a Chriſtian: others in their own ſpheare have their degree of goodneſſe, but we ſpeake of ſupernaturall divine goodneſſe, a man may know he belongs to God, if hee juſtifie wiſdome in the worſt times: if he ſtand for the truth to the utmoſt, thinking it of more price then his life. It is the firſt degree to Religion, *to hate father and mother, wife and children, and all for the Goſpell.* Now when a man will juſtifie the Truth with the loſſe of any thing in the world, it is a ſigne that man is a good man in ill times. *Vſe.* Luk. 14. 26.

Therfore in ill times let us labour to juſtifie truth, both the truth of things to be beleeved,

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and all just religious courses, not only in case of opposition being opposed, but in example, though we say nothing. *Noah* condemned the world, though he spake not a word, by making an *Arke*; so *Lot*, *Sodome*, though he told not all *Sodome* of their faults. So a man may justifie good things though he speak not a word to any man: for such a ones life is a confutation and sufficient witnesse for God against the world. Therfore it is good, though a man do not confront the world in his speeches: yet notwithstanding at least to hold a course contrary to the world in his conversation: we have need of a great deal of courage to do this: but there is no heavenly wiseman, but he is a couragious man; though in his owne spirit, he may be a weake man, yet in case of opposition, Grace will be above Nature, hee will shew then his heavenly Wisedome and Prudence and of what mettall he is made by justifying wisdome in all times: *The just shall walke therein.* But to come more directly to the words.

Heb. 11. 7.

The just shall walke in them.

A just and righteous man that is made just by them shall walk in them. Hence we may observe,

Observ. *That first men must have spirituall life, and bee just, before they can walke,* Walking is an action of life, there must be life before there can be walking; a man must first have a spirituall life, whereby he may be just, and then hee will walke as a just man. For, as wee say of a Bowle (it is *Aristins* comparison) it is first made round and

then

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then it runs round, for a man is first just and then he doth justly. It is a conceit of the Papists that good works do justifie a man. *Luther* sayes well, that *a good man doth good works.* Good workes make not the man, fruit makes not the tree, but the tree the fruit. So we are just first, and then we walk as just men. We must labour to be changed and to have a principle of spirituall life, then we shall walk and have new feet, eyes, eares, and senses: all shall then be new.

Againe, in the second place, the necessity of it appeares hence that there must be first spirituall life in the inward man, ere a man can walke. Because there will not els be a harmony and correspondency betwixt a man and his wayes. A man will not hold in those wayes that he hath an Antipathy too: therefore his nature must be altered by a higher principle, before he can like and delight in the wayes of God. This is that which Gods children desire first of God, that he would alter their natures, inlighten, change and quicken them, worke strongly and powerfully in them, that they may have a Sympathy and liking unto all that is good, first they are just and then they walke in Gods wayes.

Thou wilt first make them.

In the next place, we may observe hence, *That a just man being the prudent and wise man he walkes in Gods wayes.* That is spirituall wisdome and prudence, together with Grace, Righteousnesse and Iustice, they leade us walking in Obedience. Let no man therefore talke

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of grace and wisdome or prudence altering him, further then he makes it good by his walking. He that is just walks as a just man; he that is wise walks wisely, he that is prudent, walks prudently. Which is spoken to discover Hypocrisie in men, that would be thought to be good Christians and wisemen, because they have a great deale of speculative knowledge. But looke we to our waies, let them show whether wee be wise or foolish, just or unjust: *If a man be wise, he is wise for himself* (as *Salomon* saith) to direct his own waies. *The wisdome of the wise is to understand his owne way that he is to walke in.* If a man have not wisedome to direct his way in particular to walke to heaven-ward, he is but a foole. For a man to know so much as shall condemn him and be a witnesse against him and yet not know so much as to save him, what a miserable thing is this? Now all other men that know much and walk not answerable, they know so much as to condemne them and not to save them. Our Saviour *Christ* he calleth such, *foolish builders*, that know and will not do so unlesse there be a walking answerable to the *Wisdome* and *Prudence* prescribed, a man is but a foolish man.

Pro. 9. 12.
Pro. 14. 8.
Mat. 7.

Therefore let it be a rule of tryall, would we be thought to be *wise and prudent, Just and good?* Let us looke to our wayes, are they Gods wayes? doe we delight in these wayes? and make them our waies, then we are *wise, prudent* and *just*, *The Just shall walke in them.*

As

As *the just shall walke in them*; so whosoever walks in them, are *just, wise and prudent*: for is not he prudent who walks in those waies that leade directly to eternall happinesse? is not he a wise man that walks by rule in those wayes where he hath God over him to bee his Protector, Ruler, and Defender? is not he a wise man who walks in those wayes that fits him for all conditions whatsoever, prosperity or adversity, life or death, for all estates? he that walks therfore in Gods waies must be the only wise man.

What walking in Gods wayes implies.

Now what things doth this walking in the wayes of God imply?

1. *Perspicuity to discerne them.*

First, Perspicuity, those who walk in the waies of God, they discerne those waies to bee Gods wayes, and discerne them aright.

2. *To proceed in them.*

Then when they discerne them to be Gods good waies, answerably they proceed in them from step to step, for every action is a step to heaven or to hell: so a just man when he hath discovered a good way, he goes on still.

3. *An uniforme course.*

And then he keeps an uniform course, for so he doth who walks on in a way, he makes not indentures as he walks, but goes on steady in an uniform course, to a right end. So a just man when he hath singled out the right way, he goes on in that steedily and uniformly.

4. *Resolution*

And likewise where it is said the just walkes in them, it implies Resolution to go on in those waies till he come to the end, though there bee never so much opposition.

But how shall we know whither we go on in this way or not?

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First, he that goes on in a way the further hee hath proceeded therein, looking backe, that which he leaves behind seemes lesser and lesser in his eye, and that which he goes too greater and greater: so a man may know his progresse in the wayes of God, when earthly profits and pleasures seeme little, his former courses and pleasures seeming now base unto him, when Heaven and heavenly things seeme neere unto him, it is a signe he is neere Heaven: neere in time, and neerer in disposition and in wisedome to discerne, because the best things are greatest in his eye and esteem. In this case, it is a signe that such a one is removed from the world, and is neere unto heaven, having made a good progresse in the wayes of God.

It implyes likewise in the second place, an uniforme course of life. Such a one doth not ducies by starts now and then, but constantly, therefore we must judge of men by a tenure of life, what their constant wayes are: sometimes though they be good men, they may slep awry into an ill way, and yet come in againe. Sometimes an ill man may crosse a good way, as a theife when hee crosseth the high way, or a good man steps out of the way, but this is not their way, they are both out and to seeke of their way. A wicked man when hee speakes of good things he is out of his way; he acts a part and assumes a person he is unskilfull to act, therefore he doth it untowardly. But a mans way is his course, a good mans way is good though his

startings

starings be ill, and to ill ends too; is naught, though for passion or for bie ends, he may mend and then do good things. Therfore considering that the walking in the wayes of God is so plain and orderly; let us judge of our selves by the course of our life, and course thereof. And let those poore soules who thinke they are out of the way, because they run into some infirmities, humble themselves in this, that God judgeth not by single actions, but according to the course of a mans life, what he is. For after times Gods children gaine by their slips, which makes them looke the more warily to their wayes for ever after that. He that walkes in the way to Heaven, if he be a good man, he looketh to make surer footing in the wayes of God after his slips and fals. He labours to come so much the more hastie home, being a gainer by all his slips and fals. Let none therfore be discouraged, but let them labour that their wayes and courses may be good, and not only so, but to be uniforme, orderly and constant, and then they may speake peace to their owne soules, being such as are here described, *The iust shall walk in them.*

Againe, he that will walke aright in Gods wayes, he must be resolute against all opposition whatsoever: for we meete with many lets, hinderances and scandals, to drive us out of the way. Sometimes the ill lives of those who walke in those wayes, sometimes their slips and fals, sometimes persecution, and our owne

natures

natures are ful of scandals, subject to take this and that offence, and then we are ready to be snared on the right hand, or feared and scared on the left. And our nature so farre as it is unsanctified, is prone to catch, and ready to joyn with the world: therefore wee have need of resolution of spirit and determination: As *David, I have determined, O Lord: and I will keepe thy lawes, I have sworne that I will keepe thy righteous judgements*: this is a resolute determination.

Psal 119.106.

And then againe, pray to God with *David* that he would direct our wayes. *Oh that my wayes were so directed to keepe thy Lawes!* I see that my nature is ready to draw me away to evill, and perverse crooked courses: I see though I determine to take a good course that there is much opposition: therfore good Lord direct me in my course, direct thou my thoughts, words and carriage. Therefore that we may walke stedfastly, let us resolve with setled determination, praying to God for strength: otherwise resolution with dependance on our owne power may be a worke of the flesh: but resolve thus, these are right wayes and streight, they leade to Heaven, Happinesse and Glory, therefore I will walke in them, whatsoever come of it. We have all the discouragements which may hinder us in the wayes of God. For as we are travellers, so wee are souldiers, warfaring men that meete with many rubbs, thornes, therefore to walk amidst such dangerous wayes wee must be well shod with the

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preparation of the Gospell of peace, that is Patience, and reasons taken from thence. God hath provided spirituall armour in the Word against all oppositions that meet with us: so that by Resolution and Prayer to him, using his meanes we may go through all.

Now for a further helpe for us to walke constantly and resolutely in the wayes of God.

1. Take first the helpe of good company, if we see any man to walke in a good way, let him not walke alone, but let us joyne our selves with those that walke in Gods wayes, for why doth God leave us not onely his Word to direct us which way to goe, but likewise examples in all times, but that we should follow those examples? Which are like the *Pillar of fire* which went before *Israel* unto *Canaan*. We have a Cloude and a Pillar of examples before us (unto which hee alludes, *Hebr.* 12. 1.) to leade us unto Heaven, not onely the Word, but examples in all times. *Walke as you have us for an example* (saith *Paul*) therefore it is a character of a gracious disposition to joyne with the just, and those who walke in the waies of God. We see there is in all the creatures an instinct to keepe company with their owne kinde: As wee see in Doves, Sheep, Geese and the like. So it comes from a supernaturall gracious instinct of grace, for the good to walke and company with the good, helping them on in the way to Heaven. It is therfore a point of speciall wisdome to single out those for our company

Phil 3. 17.

who

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who are able to help us thither: as it is for travellers to choose their company to travell with.

2. Again, if we would walke aright in the wayes of God, let us have our end in our eye, like unto the traveller looks on Heaven, the day of Judgement, those times either of eternall happinesse or misery, which we must all come too. The having of these in our eye, will stone the whole course of our life, for the end infuseth vigor in our carriages, and puts a great deale of life in the use of the means, breeding a love of them, though they be harsh. Therefore we must pray and labour for Patience to conflict with our owne corruptions and those of the times we live in. This is unpleasant to doe, but when a man hath his aime and end in his eye: this inspires such vigour and strength into a man, that makes him use motives and endures contrary to his owne naturall disposition, offering a holy violence unto himselfe: as thus, it is not absolutely necessary, that I should have this or that, or have them all, or in such and such a measure, but it is absolutely necessary, that I should be saved, and not damned: therefore this course I will take, in these wayes I will and must walke, which leades to Salvation. Heb. 11. 26. Let us therefore with *Moses* have an eye to *the recompence of the reward*, and with our blessed Saviour the head of the faithfull in verse 2. before our eyes, *the joy that was set before him*, which will make us passe over all those heavy things that we are called through to suer us with the holy men of ancient time have *the prize of that high calling*

in our eye, to make us, notwithſtanding all oppoſition, preſſe forwards towards the marke.

And then againe, becauſe it is ſaid indefinitely here: *They ſhall walke in theſe wayes:* remember alwayes to take Wiſdome and Prudence along with you in all your walkings. It is put indefinitly, becauſe we ſhould leave out none. For as we ſay in things that are to be beleeved, Faith chooſeth not this object, and not another, ſo Obedience chooſeth not this object, I will obey God in this and not in this, but it goes on in all Gods wayes. Therfore if we would walke on aright in Gods wayes, there muſt be conſideration of all the relations as we ſtand to God: Firſt, what duties we owe to God in heavenly things, to pleaſe him above all, whomſoever we diſpleaſe and to ſeeke the Kingdome of Heaven and his Righteouſneſſe before all, that all things may follow which are needfull for us. 3. 1. Mat. 6. 33.

So in the next place, when we looke to our ſelves, to know thoſe wayes which are required of us in regard of our ſelves: for every Chriſtian is a Temple wherin God dwels, therfore we are to carry our ſelves holily, to be much in Prayer, and communion with God in ſecret; A man is beſt diſtinguiſhed to be a good walker by thoſe ſecret wayes betwixt God and his ſoule; thoſe walks of Meditation and Prayer, wherein there is much ſweet intercourſe betwixt God and the ſoule. Therfore in this caſe a man makes conſcience of his communion with God in his thoughts, deſires, affections, uſing all good meanes appointed 2.

ted of God to maintaine this Communion.

3. Then we ſhould looke to our own carriage in the uſe of the creatures: to carry our ſelves in all things indifferently, becauſe *Wiſdom and Prudence* is ſeen in thoſe things eſpecially, to uſe things indifferent, indifferently, not to be much in the uſe of the world, in joy or ſorrow: but in moderation to uſe theſe things, being ſure to ſet our affections upon the maine.

4. And ſo in things indifferent, not to doe them with offence and exceſſe, but to ſee and obſerve the rule in all things of indifferency.

5. And for our carriage to others in thoſe wayes, let us conſider, what we owe to thoſe above us, what reſpect is due to Governours, and what to others, what to thoſe who are without, what to thoſe who are weak, we owe an example of holy life unto them, that we give no occaſion of ſcandall: and alſo to walke wiſely towards them that are without, that wee give no occaſion for the wayes of God to be ill ſpoken off.

6. And for all conditions which God ſhall caſt us into, remember that thoſe be wayes which wee ſhould walk ſeemly in. If proſperity, let us take heed of the ſins of proſperity, pride, inſolency, ſecurity, hardnes of heart and the like. If adverſity, then let us practiſe the graces therof, take heed of murmuring and repining, dejection of ſpirit, diſpaire and the like. This is to walk like a wiſe man in all conditions, in thoſe relations he ſtands in.

7. For our words likewiſe and expreſſions to others in that kind of our walking, that they may be

be savoury and to purpose, that we labour to speak by rule, seeing we must give an account of every idle word at the day of judgement. So that in all our labours, carriage and speech we must labour to doe all wisely and justly. These are the wayes of God, and *the just walke in them.* Mat. 12.36.

Negatively what we must avoid in all our walking.

Remember in generall, we must never doe any thing against Religion, against Conscience, against a mans particular Place and Calling, or against Justice. Let us not touch upon the breach of any good thing, especially of Religion and Conscience. Thus a man shall walk in the wayes of God, if with *Wisdome and Prudence* he consider what wayes are before him, to God, to himselfe, to others: in all conditions and states of life, to see what he must, and what he must not do and then to walk in them answerably. *We must not do any thing against religion, conscience or justice.*

For our incouragement to walk in Gods wayes in our generall and particular callings.

Know first they are the most safe wayes of all, whatsoever trouble or affliction we meet withall, it is no matter, it will prove the safest way in the end. For as it was with the cloud which went before Gods people, it was both for Direction and Protection: so the Spirit of God, and the wayes of God as they serve for Direction, so they serve for Protection, God will direct and protect us if we walke in his wayes: let him be our Director, and he will be our preserver and protector in all times. 1. *The wayes of God are the most safe waies.*

Againe, they are the most pleasant wayes of all, 2. *They are the*

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most pleaſant wayes.

all, all wiſedomes wayes are paved with Proſperity and Pleaſure, for when God doth enlarge and ſanctifie the ſoule to walke in them, he giveth withall a royall gift, inward peace of conſcience and joy unſpeakable and glorious with an inlarged Spirit. God meets his children in his owne wayes, they are therefore to walke there. Let a man ſtart out of Gods wayes, hee meets with the Divell, with the Divels inſtruments, and many ſnares. But in Gods wayes, hee ſhall be ſure to meete with God, if he walke in them with humility and reſpect to God, looking up for direction and ſtrength, and denying his own wiſdome: in this caſe a man ſhall bee ſure to have God goe along with him in all his wayes. In Gods wayes expect Gods company: therfore they are the ſafeſt and the moſt pleaſant wayes.

3.

They are the moſt cleare and holy wayes. Pſal. 19. 9.

And they are the cleaneſt and holyeſt wayes of all: having this excellent property in them, that as they leade to comfort, ſo they end in comfort, they all end in Heaven. Therefore let us not be weary of Gods wayes, of Chriſtianity and our particular Callings: wherein what we doe let us doe as Gods wayes, having ſanctified them by Prayer, and doe it in obedience to God. They are Gods wayes when they are ſanctified; God hath ſet me in this ſtanding, I expect his bleſſing therein, and what bleſſing I find, I will give him the praiſe: God hath appointed that in ſerving man I ſerve him: therefore wee muſt goe on in our particular

wayes

wayes, as the wayes of God, doing every thing as the work of God, and we shall find them the comfortablest and pleasantest wayes which end in joy, happinesse and glory.

The use hereof may be first Reprehension unto those who can talke but not walke, that have tongues but not feet, to wit affections, that come by starts into the narrow way: but yet be never well till they turn back again into the world, that broad way which leads unto destruction. *Vse* 1.

Secondly, it is for Instruction, to stirre us up to walke in Gods wayes: as *Psalme* 1. *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsell of the ungodly, &c. But his delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in that Law doth he meditate day and night.* *Vse.* 2.

Thirdly, this is for Consolation, if this be our walke, then God will walk with us and the Angels of God shall have charge of us to keepe us in all our wayes: and though like *David* we slip out of the way, yet this not being our walk we come to the way againe. Though Gods children misse of their way, yet their resolution, choice and indeavour, was to walke in the way, therefore such are still in a blessed estate, and keepe their communion with God. A man is not said to alter his way, till he alter his choyce and resolution. The best man may have an ill passion and misse the way, but he will not turn from it willingly. And the worst man may have a good passion, and come into the way, but never continue in it, to make his walk. From all which it appeareth, that they are onely righteous persons, *Vse* 3. Psal. 34 7.

who continue to vvalk in the vvayes of God. It is therfore Conſolation unto them vvho take that courſe, though all the vvorld go another vvay, yet they muſt imitate juſt men. And for us vve muſt imitate theſe juſt men, though they be never ſo few in the world and deſpiſed. If we would be counted the ſervants of God, we muſt imitate them that vvalk in thoſe paths.

Now it is ſaid that the other ſort, *wicked men*, the vvayes of God ſhall have a quite contrary courſe in them.

But the Tranſgreſſors ſhall fall therein.

Exod. 14.20. As one and the ſelf-ſame *cloud* was both light to the *Iſraelites* and darkneſſe unto the *Egyptians*: So the ſame vvayes of God prove both light and darkneſſe, life and death to the godly and vvicked: as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, unto *the one they are the*

2 Cor. 2.16. *ſavour of life unto life, and unto the other the ſavour of death unto death.* Therfore now here is the concluſion of all: if no vvarning vvill ſerve the turne of all what hath bin given and ſaid: yet the word of God ſhall not returne empty, it ſhall effect that

Iſa 55.11. for vvhich it vvas ſent: one work or other it will doe: even upon the moſt perverſe,

The Tranſgreſſors ſhall fall therein.

Obſerv. Whence we ſee and may obſerve, *That the ſame word which is a word of life and ſalvation to the godly is an occaſion of ſinne and perdition unto the wicked.* The ſame Sun vvhich makes flowers and herbs to ſmel ſweet, makes carrions to ſmell worſe. The ſame vvord vvhich made the Apoſtles beleeve and confeſſe Chriſt, did alſo

make

make many others of his Disciples goe backe from him, saying: *This is a hard saying who can beare it?* So *Act.13.* The same word which made the unbeleeving *Iewes* blaspheme, did make *as many as did belong unto eternall life beleeve.* And when Christ preached, many blasphemed, and said he had a Divell: others trusted and defended him. So saith *Paul*, the same word to some is, *the savour of death unto death, and to some the savour of life unto life:* and so in another place he speakes of the same word, *but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Iews a stumbling blocke, and unto the Greekes foolishnesse, but unto them which are called both Iews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdome of God.* To this purpose *Peter* speaks of *Christ, unto you therfore who beleeve he is pretious, but unto them which are disobedient, &c. A stone of stumbling and a rocke of offence, even unto them which stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed.* The Reasons are.

Joh. 6.60. Act.13.48. 2 Cor.2.16. 1 Cor.1.23,24. 1 Pet.2.7,8.

Because, *The naturall man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishnesse unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned, but he that is spirituall judgeth all things, &c.* *Reason.* 1. 1 Cor.2.14.

Secondly, *Because they who do evill hate the light* and therefore cannot love what they hate. *This* (Christ saith) *is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darknesse better then light, because their deeds were evill.* 2. Joh.3.19.

Thirdly, Because they are blinded, therefore 3. 1 Cor.3.4.

they are led away by the god of this world Satan, so that they cannot perceive any thing that is spirituall, for God hath not given them a heart to perceive, &c.

Deut. 29. 4.

4. Fourthly, because they want faith, which is called *the Faith of Gods elect*; and we know *without Faith it is impossible to please God*: for it is said that *the word profited not those unbelieving Iews, because it was not mingled with Faith in those who heard it.*

Tit 1. 1. Heb. 11. 6. Hebr. 4. 2.

5. Fifthly, Because the Word is like the Sunne, which causeth plants to smell sweet, and a dung-hill to smell stinking. So it works grace in some, and extracts the sinne and foule vapours out of others.

Vse 1. The Vse is, First, Reproofe unto them who stumble at the wholesome Doctrines of the word, of Election, Reprobation, Predestination, and the like, such indeed stumble at Christ himself, he is a stumbling block unto them, as *Peter* speaketh. They stumble at Christ who stumble at his Word.

1. Pet. 2. 8.

Vse 2. Secondly, not to love the word the worse, because evill men be made the worse by it, which shewes rather the mighty power of the Word, which discovereth them, and will not let them be hid, unmasking Hypocrits to themselves and others. As we must not like the Sun the worse, because it makes carrion smell; nor the fan, because it winnoweth away the chaffe; so must we not fall out with the Word, because it hath these effects upon wicked men.

Vse 3. Lastly, It is for Consolation unto them that when

when their sin is reproved, fall not out with the Word, but with their sin. When they are excited to duty they hate their corruption and doe indeavour to walke honestly without reproofe. This shewes the word is not the savour of death unto death to them, but the savour of life unto life: which S. *Paul* makes a signe of election, *When they receive the word of God, as the word of God with Thankesgiving*. This indeed is a matter of praise to give God thanks for his good word, which saves our soules, and comforts us here in the way of all our Pilgrimage, till we arive at heavenly glory. 1 Thes. 2. 13.

For Conclusion of all, what then remaineth on our part to be done? Surely to hearken no more to flesh and blood, to the world or the Divell: but to heare what God saith in his most holy word, and to frame our hearts with a strong Resolution to this *Returning* here exhorted to. O if we knew the many miseries and sorrows which attendeth wretched and miserable sinners, and sinfull courses here and hereafter, it would be our first work to follow Gods counsell to his people, to *Returne* from our sinfull wayes, to meet so gratious and mercifull a God: that he may (as his promise is) heale our *Backslidings*, and be, *as the Dew unto us*, to make us fruitfull and abundant in every good and perfect work. Psal. 32. 10.

What can be said more for our incouragement then that which hath bin delivered in this Chapter, God the party offended, who is JEHOVAH, God al-sufficient exhorts us to return unto him,

who is able and willing to help. And he also (out of his rich goodnesse) forewarneth us of the dangerous estate a sinner is in: who being *fallen by his iniquity*, ought therfore to pitty himselfe; *Returne* and not run on in a further course of disobedience, and backsliding. And wel is are put in our mouths, dictated by God himselfe, which needs must be very prevailing with him: what an incouragement is this? yea further (as we have heard) these petitions are all answered graciously and abundantly above all they did aske; wherin God surmounteth our desires and thoughts, as we heard at large. Wherby we also may be confident to have our petitions and suites in like sort granted, if we goe unto God with his owne words, and forme prescribed. If we *take with us words* of Prayer we shall be sure to vanquish all our spirituall enemies: for faithfull Prayer workes wonders in Heaven and Earth. And that God doth not bid us be religious to our losse; he sheweth that we shall loose nothing by following his counsell, and walking in a religious course of life: having abhominated our Idols, *He will observe us, and see us*, and be a shelter unto us, having a derivation of fruitfulnes from his fulnes: *In me is thy fruit found.*

Iam. 5. 16.

Lastly, we have heard who can make right use of these things delivered? only *the wise and prudent*: such only can understand heavenly things to purpose: *His secret is with them that feare him*: and *Wisedome is* (onely) *justified of her children*. When others have no heart given them to perceive

Psal. 25. 14. Mat. 11. 19.

ceive Gods waies aright. (as *Moses* speaketh) *Transgressors* fall in Gods *right wayes*, whilst the just walks comfortably in them. O then let us have sin every day more and more, and be in love with Religion and the wayes of God: for that's the true good, which is the everlasting good, that better *Maries part*, which shall never be taken away: *Whosoever drinks of this living water, shall never thirst againe.* The best things of this world, have but the shadow, not the substance of goodnesse. Let us then be wise for our selves, and pity our selves in time, *whilst it is called to day*, because (as our Saviour speaks) *The night approacheth, wherein no man can worke.* O then, let us often examin our hearts and covenant with them, let us see our sins as they are, and Gods goodnesse as it is; that our scarlet sins may be done away as a mist from before him. O banish away our *Atheisme*, which by our sinfull conversation proclaimeth us to be of the number of those fooles, who have said in their heart, that there is no God. This serious consideration, alwayes makes first a *stop*, and then a *Returning*; to beleeve indeed that there is a God, who made the world, and a judgement to come. This God (by *Moses*) calleth true *Wisdome* indeed, *To remember our latter end*: O (saith he) *that they were wise that they would think of these things*: of which things? the miseries which attend sin heere and hereafter, and the blessings and comforts which follow a godly life both heere and hereafter, *That they would remember their latter end*,

Luk. 10. 42.

Ioh. 4. 14.

Ioh. 9. 4.

Isa. 1. 18.

Psal. 14. 1.

Deut. 32. 29.

Lamen. 1. 9.

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the neglect whereof *Ieremy* sheweth was the cause: *that they came down wonderfully and had no comforter: because they remembred not their latter end.*

Therfore let us study this point well; that there is a God and a judgement to come, and this will compell us even out of self-love to returne from our sinfull courses, and make a stop. By this means we shall not need a *Philips* boy to cry to us every day, we are mortall and must die, if our meditations once a day be both in *Heaven* and *Hell*. These strong considerations (aided with strong rationall reflections on our selves) will keep us within compasse, overaw us and make us quake and tremble to go on in sin, which is worse then the Divel in this, that therby he became a Divel. This will drive us to fly unto God, that he may *heale our Backslidings*, who is described *with healing under his wings*, who in the dayes of his flesh healed all miserable and *Returning Backsliders* who ever came unto him. Therfore let us lay to heart these things, that so we may be kept in soul and body pure and unspotted, holy and without blame in his sight, untill the day of Redemption, when our mortality shall put on immortality, and our corruptible incorruption, to reigne with God for ever and ever.

Mal. 4. 2.

1 Cor. 15. 54.

* * *

FINIS.

THE SAINTS PRIVILEDGE, OR,

A Christians constant Advocate:

Containing a short, but most sweet direction for every true Christian to walke comfortably through this valley of teares.

By the Faithfull and Reverend *Divine*, R. Sibs, D.D. *and sometime* Preacher to the Honourable Society of *Grayes-Inne*.

LONDON,
Printed by *G. M.* for *George Edwards* dwelling in Greene-Arbour at the signe of the Angell,
MDCXLI.

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THE SAINTS PRIVILEDGE.

IOHN 16. 8, 9, 10.

When he is come, he shall reproove the world of sin, righteousnesse and judgement. Of sinne, because they beleeve not in me; Of righteousnes, because I go to my Father; Of judgement, because the Prince of this world is judged.

Especially the 10. verse. *Of righteousnesse, because I go to my Father and you shall see me no more.*

OUR blessed Saviour descending from Heaven to Earth for the Redemption of man: after he had accomplished that great work, he ascended thither againe. And knowing his Disciples would take his departure very heavily, he

hee labours to arme them against the assaults of all griefe and sorrow that might otherwise oppresse them, and that by many arguments. Among the rest, this is not the least, that when he is gone away, he will send the Comforter unto them. God never takes away any thing from his children but he sends them a better. And this Comforter whom he promised to send shall beare them through in all their Ministery, all functions, and in effect hee thus bespeakes them. You my Disciples are to encounter with the world, Be of good comfort, my Spirit shall go along with you, and *he shall reprooue the world of sinne, righteousnesse and judgement.* Of your selves you are too weake, but the Spirit shall strengthen you, and make way into the hearts of those that shall be saved, by convincing them of *sin, righteousnes and judgement*; So that be not discouraged, the Spirit shall breath courage into you and make way for your doctrine. *When the Comforter is come, he shall reprove the world of sin, and of righteousnes, and judgement: Of sin, because they beleeve not in me, Of righteousnes, because I goe to the Father; Of judgement, because the Prince of this world is judged.*

There are three main parts of salvation.

Knowledge of our misery, knowledge of our deliverance, and a life answerable. The Holy Ghost shall worke all these, he shall Convince the world of their owne sinne, of righteousnesse by a Mediator, and of a reformation of life: So that the Holy Ghost shall goe along with you in

in the carriage of the whole buſineſſe of mans ſalvation. Where he begins, he makes an end. Where he Convinces of ſin, he Convinces of righteouſneſſe, and then of a neceſſity of a reformation, he beares all before him, and he doth it in a ſpirituall order.

First, he convinces the world of ſin, then of righteouſnes, then of judgement, becauſe it were in vain to convince of the righteouſnes of Chriſt, unles he hath before convinced of ſin; For who cares for balme that is not wounded? Who cares for a pardon that is not condemned? therfore he convinces of ſin firſt. I have ſpoken heretofore of convincing of ſin. I. Convincing of ſin.

Here is a threefold convincing of ſin, of righteouſneſſe, and of judgement, and every one of theſe hath a reaſon added therto. *Of ſin, becauſe they beleeve not in me; Of righteouſneſſe, becauſe I goe to my Father; Of judgement, becauſe the Prince of this world is judged.*

The Holy Ghoſt begins with convincing of ſin; what is this convincing? It is a cleare and infallible demonſtration of our condition, It brings a commanding light into the ſoule, it ſets downe the ſoule and takes away all cavils, all turnings and windings. To convince is to make a man as the Pſalmiſts phraſe is, lay his hand upon his mouth. Light is a convincing thing, now we ſee the Sun, we ſee it is day, though ten thouſand men ſhould ſay it is not day, wee would not beleeve them, becauſe the convincing hereof is undeniable; that he muſt be an unreaſonable man that gainſayes it. What is this convincing.

So

So then the Spirit of God brings a commanding light into the soule undeniable, thou art thus and thus, here no shifting, no winding and turning will serve the turne, when the Holy Ghost comes with this light. I do but plainly unfold this.

This Conviction of the Holy Ghost is not in generall onely, that all men are sinners, but particular and strong, thou art a sinner, and thou art in danger of damnation; And it is universall, taking in sins of nature, sins of life, sins of the understanding, will, and affections, and it is not of sinne onely, but of the misery by sin, of the danger, folly, and madnesse of sin, and of the aggravations that greaten sin: as of slighting so many good motions, withstanding so many meanes, abusing so many mercies. The Holy Ghost Convinces us throughly, that wee can have nothing to reply. Because I have spoken of this before, I am short. Beloved, unlesse the Holy Ghost Convince, there will be no Convincing, our deceitfull hearts have so many windings and turnings, proud nature arames it selfe with defences, as a hedge-hogg winds himselfe round and defends himself by his pricks. So you have many cloake themselves with strong words, ill translations upon others, frivolous mitigations, the way of the multitude, as with a coate of male to keep out this Conviction, that did not the Holy Ghost strike in hard with their consciences, Thou art the man, this work would never be done.

Quest. But you will aske me this Question, how shall

we

wee know common Conviction of conscience from this of the Spirit: for carnall men that goe to Hell are Convinced by a Common Conviction. What is this saving Conviction?

Answer, Common Conviction by the light of Nature is a weake Conviction, a little sparke will shew a little light, but it will not inlighten a roome, it must be the worke of some greater light, as the Sun; the Spirit is a strong light, stronger then natural conscience. Naturall conscience and common light is of some breaches of the second Table. Naturall conscience never convinces of corrupt nature, but the Spirit doth most of all, as you may see in *David*, *Psal.* 51. He resolves all into this, as if he should say, what should I tell you of my murther and adultery, in sin did my mother conceive me, so a true Christian doth not look to the branches so much as to the roote.

Answ. 1. *Difference.*

Psal. 51.

Then againe, a naturall conscience when it convinceth a man, it is against his will, it makes him not the better man, he mends not upon it, but he is tortured and tormented. But a man that is convinced by the Holy Ghost, he takes Gods part against himselfe, he is willing to be laid open that he may find the greater mercy; so that there is a grand difference betweene common conviction of nature, and the conviction of the Spirit. The Conviction of the Spirit is the light of the Spirit, which is of a higher nature then that of naturall conscience, I will send the Comforter, when hee comes he will greatly inlighten and over-power the soule.

2. *Difference.*

3. Difference.

Againe, the Conviction of the Spirit sticks by a man, it never leaves the soule: But that of an ordinary conscience it is but for a flash, and after they are worse then they were before. I must cut off these things, because the time is alwaies past upon these occasions before we begin.

Vse.

Come we therefore to make some Vse. The Spirit doth convince of sin. But how? by the Ministery ordinarily, though not alone by the Ministery. Therfore we must labour willingly to submit to the Ministery convincing of sin. Conscience will convince first or last. Is it not better to have a saving Conviction now to purpose, then to have a bare desperate Conviction in Hell. O beloved all the admonitions wee heare, if we regard them not now, we shall hereafter, therefore labour to make good use of this Sword of the Spirit of God, and it is an argument of a good heart to wish, O that the Ministery might meet with my corruption, that it may be discovered to me to the full. A true heart thinkes sin the greatest enemy, and of all other miseries it desires to be freed from the thraldome therof; For that defiles Heaven and Earth and seperates God from his creature. Its that that threw Angels out of Heaven, *Adam* out of Paradice. What imbitters blessings and puts a sting into all afflictions but sin: if it were not for sin we would take up any crosse, and beare any affliction more quietly then we doe.

Therefore as we desire to be saved, and to stand with comfort before God at the day of judge-

judgement, let us desire and endeavour to bee throughly convinced of sin. Take heede of resisting the Spirit of God in the Ministery: why are so many led captives of their lusts, but because they hate the Ministery of the Word, they looke upon it as *Ahab* did upon *Elias*, Hast thou found me, O my Enemy. They naturally are in love with their sins, and there is none so much hated as those that present themselves to themselves. A man take him in his pure naturals is a foolish creature, his heart rises against Conviction. You see the Pharisees, Wise men, Learned men, being convinced they hated Christ to the death; why? because he did untombe them and discover the dead mens bones within. So many now a dayes that are convinced, have any that by life or speech discover their sin unto them, if it were possible and in their power to the death. Thus the Holy Ghost convinces of sin. But before I leave this point, let me adde this from the reason or ground of this Conviction [*Because they beleeve not in me*] That unbeleefe makes all other sins damnable, no sin is damnable if we could beleeve and repent. Therefore we are convinced of sin, because we doe not beleeve: as we say of a man that is condemned, because hee cannot read, therefore he is condemned, he should escape if he could read being for no great fault; So it is here, it is not beleeving in Christ and repenting makes all other sins deadly. Mat. 23. 27.

The differing of one man from another is

their faith and repentance, some there be whose sins are greater then others, yet by the Spirit of God and Faith, they worke them out every day. It is Faith in the brazen Serpent that takes away the sting of the fiery Serpents.

I have done with the conviction of sin. Let us now come to speake of the conviction of Righteousnesse.

2. Conviction of Righteousnes.

Of righteousnesse, because I goe to my Father and you shall see me no more; It is a fit time for the Holy Ghost to convince Gods people of Righteousnesse when they are convinced of sin before, then they can relish Christ: Balme is balme indeed when the wound is discovered and felt, O then a pardon is welcome when the partie is condemned. The reason of this conviction of righteousnesse is, *because I goe to my Father, and you shall see me no more.* The Holy Ghost as hee sets on sin upon the conscience, so hee takes off sin by applying to the conscience the Righteousnesse of Christ, this is his office; first, to convince the world of sin; and then to convince of Righteousnesse, wherby we stand righteous before God.

And this Righteousnesse heere is not our owne inherent, but the Righteousnesse of Christ a Mediatour, God and Man.

A fourefold gradation of conviction of righteousnesse.

The Holy Ghost convinces of Righteousnesse in this order of a fourefold gradation.

First, that there must bee a Righteousnesse, and a full Righteousnesse.

The second is this, that there is no such Righteousnesse in the creature. Third.

Thirdly, that this is to be had in Christ the Mediator.

Fourthly, that this righteousnesse is our righteousnesse.

First there must be a righteousnesse, for wee have to deale with a God who is righteousnesse it selfe; and no uncleane thing shall come into Heaven, unlesse we have a righteousnesse, how shall we looke God in the face, or how can we escape hell. 1. Gradation.

Now for the second, that it is not in any creature, men or Angels, we have not a righteousnesse of our owne; for there are divers things to bee satisfied, God himselfe, and the Law, and our owne consciences, and the world. Perhaps wee may have a righteousnesse to satisfie the world, because we live civilly; O but that will not satisfie conscience; And then there must be a satisfaction to the Law, which is a large thing that condemnes our thoughts, desires, but God is the most perfect of all. Put case we have a righteousnesse of a good carriage among men, this will not satisfie God, and the Law, it will not satisfie conscience; men they are our fellow-prisoners, conscience will not be contented but with that which will content God, when conscience sees there is such a righteousnesse found out by the wisedome of God that contents him, else conscience will be alwayes in doubts and feares. 2. Gradation.

Thirdly, this righteousnesse is to be had in Christ. What is the righteousnesse of Christ? 3. Gradation.

The righteousnesse of Christ is that righteousnesse that is founded upon his obedience, active fulfilling the Law, and passive discharging all our debts, satisfying Gods Justice; the meritoriousnesse of both of them is founded upon the purity of his Nature, all his sufferings and doings had their excellency from the personall Union of God and Man, in reference to which Union we may without blasphemy averre that God performed the Law, God died for us.

1.

4. Gradation.

Fourthly and lastly, this righteousnesse is our righteousnesse, the Spirit convinceth that this belongs to all beleevers, for it is better then *Adam* had, his righteousnesse was the righteousnesse of a man; This righteousnesse is the righteousnesse of a mediator; And it is such a righteousnesse, that when wee are cloathed with it, we may goe through the Justice of God, wee may have accesse with boldnesse to the throne of grace, and say, Lord I come in the righteousnesse of Christ that hath appeased thy wrath and satisfied thy justice: this the Holy Ghost convinces of.

Quest. But you will aske mee, how doth the Holy Ghost convince me of the righteousnesse of Christ?

Answ. I answer, First the Holy Ghost presents to the soule the knowledge of this excellent righteousnesse, and then creates a hand of faith to imbrace it being proposed; you that are humble and broken hearted sinners, here is Christ for you. The Spirit of God doth not onely reveale the ex-

excellency of Christ, but that this belongs to me, that Christ is given for me, and that revelation of the Spirit doth sway the soule, when the Spirit doth not tell in generall onely, that Christ is an excellent Saviour, but shall relate to a Christian soule, God gave Christ for thee: this swayes the heart to rest upon Christ, whereupon the marriage is made up betweene the soule and Christ, the soule saies I am Christs, and I give my selfe to Christ, and to whatsoever accompanies Christ: and then as it is in marriage, the persons by vertue of that relation have interest into each others substance and estate. So when this mysticall marriage is made up betweene Christ and us, wee have a right unto Christ by all rights, by titles of purchase and redemption; Hee hath purchased Heaven for us, and us for Heaven; all that Christ hath is ours, all his good is ours, our sinnes his, and his righteousnesse ours; So when the Holy Ghost convinces mee of Christs righteousnesse, and gives me faith to imbrace it, then Christ is mine with all he hath. By this I have spoken you may see how the Spirit convinces, doe but imagine what a blessed condition the soule is in when this match is made.

But you will aske me, why is the sending of the Spirit necessary for the convincing of this righteousnesse?

I answer for divers reasons.

First, because it is above the conceit of man, that there should be such a righteousnesse of *Reason* 1.

God-man; therefore it is discovered by the Spirit, and when it is discovered, the Spirit must open the eyes of the soule to see, els wee shall have a naturall knowledge of supernaturall things; for a man by a naturall knowledge may understand them, so as to be able to discourse of them, therefore to change the soule, there must be a supernaturall sight to see supernaturall things. A divell incarnate may know all things and yet want to see, onely the Holy Ghost gives inward sight, inward eyes, and works faith to see Christ as mine.

Reason 2. Against, the sending of the Holy Ghost is necessary for this conviction, because hee alone must set downe the soule and make the conscience quiet, who is greater then the conscience. Conscience will clamour thou art a sinner, the Holy Ghost convinces, in Christ thou art righteous. The Holy Ghost onely knowes what is in the heart of God the Father, and in the heart of every man: He onely knowes the intent of the Father to every Christian, and can answer all inward Objections and Cavils of flesh and blood raised up against the soule; therefore the convincing of the Holy Ghost is necessary. Howsoever Christ hath purchased our peace, yet the Holy Ghost must apply it: For the conscience is so full of clamours, that unlesse the Holy Ghost apply what Christ hath done, conscience will not bee satisfied: God the Father hath appointed Christ, and Christ hath wrought it, but the third person must apply

ply it to the soule, to assure us, that this belongs to us. The application of all good things to the soule that Christ the Sonne hath wrought, is the proper office of the third person. In civill Contracts here there must not onely be a purchase but a Seale, though Christ hath wrought righteousnesse for us, the Spirit must seale it to every soule, this righteousnesse belongs to you, Christ is yours with all that is his.

Againe, it must needes bee a worke of the Spirit, because flesh and blood is full of pride and would faine have some righteousnesse of their owne, the Jewes were of this temper, and it hath beene the greatest question from the beginning of the world till this day, what is that righteousnesse whereby wee must stand before God, but Gods Spirit answers all objections. Beloved, the best of us though in an estate of grace, if the Holy Ghost doe not convince us, wee shall bee in darkenesse and call all into question, therefore wee must not bee convinced onely at the first, but in a continued course of Christianity: unlesse the Holy Ghost doth this, wee shall fall into a dungeon of darkenesse, therefore the convincing of the Holy Ghost is necessary. *Reason 3.*

Beloved this should make us take heed how we heare, and how we reade, even to beg this convincing of the Spirit in every Ordinance. O Lord vouchsafe the Spirit of revelation, and take the scales off mine eyes, that as these are truths of themselves, so they may be truths to me,

me, Sway my ſoule that I may caſt my ſelfe upon thy mercy in Chriſt. &c.

Object. I muſt anſwer ſome Caſes that many a poore ſoule is troubled withall. Alas I am not convinced by the Spirit that Chriſt is my righteouſneſſe, therefore what caſe am I in?

Anſw. I anſwer, ſome are more ſtrongly convinced and ſome leſſe. Let a man be careleſſe of holy duties, and he is leſſe convinced, but let him be conſtant therein and he ſhall finde the Holy Ghoſt convincing him more ſtrongly, that the righteouſneſſe of Chriſt is his; there are many preſumptuous perſons that turne the grace of God into wantonneſſe, who becauſe through the Enthuſiaſmes of Satan they never queſtion their eſtate, but conceit themſelves to be good men and in the eſtate of grace, thinke this to be the convincing of the Holy Ghoſt; whereas this is a generall rule, Spirituall convincing is not totall, but alwayes leaves in the heart ſome drugs of doubting, as a ſhip that rides at anchor, though it may reele too and fro, yet is it ſafe for the maine. So it is with the ſoule that is truely convinced, it is ſafe for the maine, yet it is tumbled and toſſed with many doubts and feares, but their Anchor is in Heaven.

Take this for a ground of comfort ſubſcribed unto in the experience of all beleevers, that the ſpirit of God ſo farre convinces them of Chriſts righteouſneſſe, as preſerves in them ſuch a power of grace as to caſt themſelves upon the

the mercy of God in Christ; and God will not quench that sparke, though there be little or no light, yet there will be heate; God will send his Spirit into the heart, so far as it shall not betray it selfe to despaire, and let such a beame into the soule, as all the power in hell shall not be able to keepe out; but it is our owne neglect that we are not more strongly convinced so as to breake through all. This is the priviledge of a constant carefull Christian, to be strongly convinced of the righteousnesse of Christ.

Thus we see how the Holy Ghost convinceth us of righteousnesse, other things I must omit. If this be so, I beseech you let us not loose our priviledges and prerogatives, doth God give grace, and give Christ with all his righteousnesse, and shall not we improove them? Let us use this righteousnesse in all temptations. Let us pleade it to God himselfe, when hee seemes to be our enemy. Lord thou hast ordained a righteousnesse, the righteousnesse of Christ, that hath given full satisfaction to thy justice, and he hath given me a title to Heaven: howsoever my soule be in darknesse, yet Lord I come unto thee in the name of my Saviour, that thou wouldest perswade my soule of that righteousnesse. I would glorifie thy Name, Wherein wilt thou be glorified? In mercy or justice? O in mercy above all. I cannot glorifie thee in thy mercy, unlesse thou perswade me of the righteousnesse of Christ. Can I love thee except thou love mee first? Canst thou

Vse.

have

have any free and voluntary obedience from me, unlesse I be convinced that Christ is mine: Now Lord I beseech thee, let me be such as thou maist take delight in. Beloved, since we have meanes of such a gift, let us never rest till wee have it. If Satan set upon us, hold this out, if hee tell thee thou art a sinner, tell him I have a greater righteousnesse then my owne, even the righteousnesse of God-Man. I have a righteousnesse above all my unrighteousnesse. Satan saith God is displeased with me, I but he is more pleased with me in Christ then displeased with mee in my selfe. Satan saith I have sinned against God, I but not against the remedy, send Satan to Christ. O but thou hast a corrupt nature that makes thee runne into this sinne and that sinne; but there is a spring of mercy in God, and an overrunning fountaine of righteousnesse in Christ, an over-flowing sea of the blood of Christ. Therefore let us labour to improove this righteousnesse of Christ to God and Satan, and against all temptations, yea against our owne consciences, I am thus and thus; yet God is thus and thus, all his Attributes are conveyed to me in Christ. Let us exalt God and Christ, and set up Christ above our sins, above any thing in the world, as S. *Paul*, who counted all things dung and drosse for the excellent knowledge of Christ. *Quest.* You will aske mee, How shall wee know whether we be convinced of this righteousnesse or no? *Answ.* I answer, we may know by the Method Christ uses in convincing; First, hee convinces

convinces of sin and then of righteousnesse, for a man to catch at righteousnesse before hee be convinced of sinne, it is but an usurpation; for the Holy Ghost first convinces of sin.

Therfore you have many perish, because they never were abased enough. Beloved, people are not lost enough, and not miserable enough for Christ, and not broken enough for him, and therfore they goe without him. But how shall I know that the Holy Ghost hath convinced me enough of sin, so that I may without presumption apply the righteousnesse of Christ unto my selfe? *Quest.*

Onely thus, if the Holy Ghost have discovered my sinfull condition of nature and life, so as to worke in me an hatred of sin, and to alter my bent another way, and so make Christ sweet unto me, then I am sufficiently convinced of sin. *Answ.*

This in answer to that Question by the way. To returne in the next place, I may know I am convinced throughly of the righteousnesse of Christ by the witnesse and worke of the Spirit. The Spirit brings light and faith, the work of the Spirit hath a light of its owne, as I know I beleeve, when I beleeve, but sometimes we have not the reflect act of faith whereby to evidence our owne graces to our selves, but ever he that is convinced of the Spirit of God, his heart will be wrought to beare marvellous love to God, upon this apprehension, that God is mine, and Christ is mine, the soule is constrained to love, whereupon ensues an enlargement of heart and a prevalency of comfort above all discomfort, for love

love casteth out feare. This one comfort that our sins are forgiven and that we have right and title to Heaven, when the soule is convinced of this it is in a blessed condition, then what is poverty and what is imprisonment? not worthy to bee reckoned in respect of the glory that shall bee revealed.

Againe, where the Holy Ghost convinces enough, there is inward peace and great joy suitable to the righteousnesse. As the righteousnesse is an excellent righteousnesse of God-Man, so that peace and joy that comes from it is unspeakable peace and joy: So that when the heart sees it selfe instated in peace and joy, as you have it, *Rom.* 5. *Being justified by faith we have peace towards God*, not only inward peace and joy, but a peace that will shew it selfe abroad, a glorious peace, a peace that will make us glory, *vers.* 3. *We glory in tribulation.* A hard matter to glory in abasement: not onely so, but we glory in God, God is ours, and Christs righteousnesse ours; when Christ hath satisfied Gods wrath, then wee may make our boast of God.

Againe, where this conviction of righteousnes is, it answers all objections, the doubting heart will object this and that, but the Spirit of God shewes an All-sufficiency in Christs obedience, and that sets the soule downe quietly in all crosses, and calmes it in all stormes in some degree. Where the soule is convinced of the righteousnesse of Christ, there the conscience demands boldly: *It is God that justifies, who shall condemn? It*

is

is Christ that is dead and risen again, and sits at the right hand of God; Who shall lay any thing to the charge of Gods chosen. So that a convinced conscience dares all creatures in Heaven and Earth, it works strongly and boldly. I shall not need to inlarge this, you know whether you are convinced. To end the Point, I beseech you labour to live by this Faith, here is an evidence if we can live by it: How is that? Every day to make use of the righteousnesse of Christ, as every day we run into sin. Be sure wee have our consciences sprinkled with the blood of Christ, that as we increase new guilt, so we may have a new pardon; therefore every day labour to see God as reconciled and Christ as our Advocate with the Father. Christ is now in Heaven, if wee sin, make use of him, this should be the life of a Christian, to make use of Christs righteousnesse; when you finde nature polluted, goe to God, and say, Lord my nature though foule in it selfe, yet is holy and pure in Christ, He tooke the weakenesse of the humane nature unto him that hee might communicate the worth and efficacy of his divine nature unto me, and for my actions I am a sinner, but Christ hath fully discharged all my debts, and is now in Heaven, he hath performed all righteousnesse for me. Looke not upon me as in my selfe, but looke upon me in Christ, He and I am one. This should be every daies exercise to see our selves in Christ, and so see him and our selves one. I should inlarge the point further, but I will speak a word of the reason.

Vse.

What

What is the reason why the Comforter may and shall convince of righteousnesse? *Because I go to the Father*; what strength is there in that reason? why this, Christ took upon him to be our surety, and he must acquit us of all our sins ere he can go to his Father: If one sin had beene unsatisfied for he could not have gone to his Father, but now he is gone to his Father, therfore all our sins are satisfied for, so that now the Ascention of Christ is a sufficient pledge to me that my person is accepted, and my sins pardoned, because he is gone to his Father to appeare before the Father for us, which he could not have done, had he not fulfilled all righteousnesse.

But wherefore did he go to the Father? why to make application of what he had wrought. If Christ should not have gone to the Father, hee could not have sent the Holy Ghost to us. Therfore there is great use of this going to his Father. Satan pleads before God we are such and such, I but saith Christ I have shed my blood for them, and there he perfumes all our weake prayers; if we were not imperfect what need we a Mediator in Heaven. Therefore he is gone to Heaven to disanull all Satans accusations, and to provide a place for us; die when wee will, our place is ready.

Then again, he is gone to the Father to cloath us with a sweet relation, to make the Father our Father. For he saith, *Joh. 17. 17. I goe to my Father and to your Father*; so that he is not ashamed to call us Brethren, by vertue of this we may go to God

and

and call him Father, and when we dye we may without presumption say, Father into thy hands I commend my spirit, for the Father loves us as he loved Christ, with one and the same love, though in a farre different degree. What a comfort is this, that when we die, we goe to our Father that is better then any earthly Father; Therfore it should joy us when the time of our departure comes: We see old *Iacob* when hee saw the Chariots come out of *Egypt*, how his heart leaped, because he should go to see his Son *Ioseph*: So when death is sent to transport us to Christ, to Heaven, had we a strong faith wee should bee exceeding glad.

And let us learne here the art of Faith from Christ, *I goe to the Father*, saith hee, there was a great deal of time yet to passe, no lesse then forty dayes after his Resurrection before hee went to the Father, yet he saith, I goe to the Father, to shew that faith presents things future as present; Faith sees Heaven as present, and the day of judgement as present, and doth affect the soule as if they were now existent. If we had a Spirit of faith it would thus present things farre off as nigh at hand. Therfore when we meet with any thing that may make our way to Heaven seeme long or troublesome, exercise your Faith, and make your time present to your spirit though remote from sence, say I goe to the Father, what though I goe through blood and a shamefull death, yea perhaps a tormentfull death: yet I goe to the Father; when a man is once perswa-

ded that God is his Father in Christ, it will make him walk to Heaven before his time.

Vse. Let us make Vse of this point of Christs going to the Father. Beloved, there is not a point of Religion but hath a wonderfull spring of comfort, and it is want of faith that wee doe not draw more comfort from them. When therfore we part with our friends by death, thinke they are gone to the Father. If yee loved mee, saith Christ, ye would rejoyce, because I said, *I goe to the Father*. If we love our friends, we should rejoyce when they die; Beloved, this should comfort us, Christ is gone to his Father, O what welcome was there of Christ when hee came into Heaven, the same welcome will there be when we go to the Father? How joyfull entertainment shall vve have of the Father and the Son? Therfore death should not be troublesome to us, say Christs righteousnesse is mine, therfore I know I shall goe to the father, what care I then what kind of pains I go through. If a man be going to a desired place, howsoever the way be troublesome, the sweetnes of the end will make him forget the discouragements of his passage. Perhaps we must vvade to Heaven through a Sea of bloud, it matters not, the end vvill recompence all, though vve loose our limbes by the way: It is better to limpe to Heaven, then dance to Hell.

FINIS.

AN ALPHABETICALL INDEX of the Speciall Points contained *in this Booke.*

A

Actions.

Actions that are good, are ever accompanied with comfort, *Page* 284.

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